SCHOOLING ISLAM

THE CULTURE AND POLITICS OF MODERN MUSLIM EDUCATION

EDITED BY
ROBERT W. HEFNER AND
MUHAMMAD QASIM ZAMAN

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Schooling Islam

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Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman

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Contents

Acknowledgments vii

A Note on Transliteration and Spelling ix

Contributors xi

Chapter 1
Introduction: The Culture, Politics, and Future of Muslim Education Robert W. Hefner 1

Chapter 2
Madrasas Medieval and Modern: Politics, Education, and the Problem of Muslim Identity Jonathan P. Berkey 40

Chapter 3
Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas of South Asia Muhammad Qasim Zaman 61

Chapter 4
Madrasas and Minorities in Secular India Barbara Metcalf 87

Chapter 5
The "Recentering" of Religious Knowledge and Discourse: The Case of al-Azhar in Twentieth-Century Egypt Malika Zeghal 107

Chapter 6
Madrasas in Morocco: Their Vanishing Public Role Dale F. Eickelman 131

Chapter 7
Islam and Education in Secular Turkey: State Policies and the Emergence of the Fethullah Gülen Group Bekim Agai 149

Chapter 8
Pesantren and Madrasa: Muslim Schools and National Ideals in Indonesia Azyumardi Azra, Dina Afrianty, and Robert W. Hefner 172

Chapter 9
The Transformation of Muslim Schooling in Mali: The Madrasa as an Institution of Social and Religious Mediation Louis Brenner 199

Chapter 10
Islamic Education in Britain: Approaches to Religious Knowledge in a Pluralistic Society Peter Mandaville 224

Chapter 11
Epilogue: Competing Conceptions of Religious Education Muhammad Qasim Zaman 242

Index 269

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A Note on Transliteration and Spelling

The contributors to this volume draw on a broad array of languages, with their particular conventions of transliteration and spelling. In the interest of some degree of consistency, we have kept the transliteration of non-English terms to a minimum. With the exception of the ‘ to indicate the Arabic letter *‘ayn* (as in shari‘a) and ’ to indicate the *hamza* (as in Qur’an), we have dispensed with diacritical marks in this volume. The *hamza* is, moreover, indicated only when it occurs within a word (as in Qur’an) but not when it comes at the end (thus ‘ulama rather than ‘ulama’).

The term “madrasa” is spelled in many different ways in English (e.g., madrasah; madrassa; madrassah, etc.). It was commonly rendered as médersa in French West Africa and is spelled as medrese in Turkish. We have retained the Turkish spelling in chapter seven, but have otherwise adopted “madrasa” as our preferred spelling. We have also retained, when necessary, certain other spellings commonly used in English-language materials in particular contexts, e.g., “Dar ul-Uloom” rather than “Dar al-‘ulum.” With the exception, principally, of the term “‘ulama” (singlular: *‘alim*), we have usually indicated the plural form of Arabic terms with the addition of an *s* to the singular form, thus “madrasas” rather than “madaris,” “fatwas” rather than “fatawa,” etc.

Finally, certain words that occur very frequently throughout the volume (e.g., madrasa, ‘ulama, and shari‘a) are not italicized. Other non-English words are usually italicized only at their first occurence.

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Schooling Islam

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Culture, Politics, and Future of Muslim Education

Robert W. Hefner

Since the Taliban rolled into Kabul on September 26, 1996, Western media have grappled with the question of the nature of Islamic radicalism and its relation to religious education.[1] Several commentators were quick to place much of the blame for the radicals' rise on madrasas, religious schools devoted to the study of Islamic traditions of knowledge. A widely cited article in the *New York Times Magazine* reported that in Pakistan, "There are one million students studying in the country's 10,000 or so madrasas, and militant Islam is at the core of most of these schools" (Goldberg 2000). Other commentators suspected that an equally militant spirit might lie at the heart of madrasa education everywhere.

In light of the tumultuous events taking place in some Muslim societies, it is not surprising that some Western commentators were quick to point a finger of blame at this most pivotal of Islamic institutions. After all, the Taliban leadership *did* emerge out of madrasas located near refugee camps along the Afghan-Pakistan border. In the 1980s, madrasas in these territories grew rapidly in size and influence. Their growth was the result of several factors: a continuing influx of Afghan refugees; the inability of poor Pakistanis to get access to affordable education; and donations from patrons in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf States—gifts sanctioned, it should be remembered, by American officials intent on rallying support for the anti-Soviet cause (ICG 2002; Zaman 2002, 136). In these difficult circumstances, some Pakistani madrasas did indeed become training centers for *jihadi* militants. Equally striking, even before the *mujahidin* victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan, some jihadis turned their aim away from the Soviets to other alleged enemies of Islam. In Pakistan, Sunni militants battled members of the Shi'i minority (see Zaman 2002, and this volume). Others carried out attacks against targets in the Indian-occupied province of Kashmir. Still others set their sights on the United States, taking exception to its policies in the Muslim world.

Events in Indonesia raised similar concerns about the political effects of madrasa education (Arza, Afrianty, and Hefner, this volume). In the months following the resignation of President Soeharto's authoritarian

government in May 1998, hundreds of radical Islamist paramilitaries sprang up in cities and towns across the country. Several boasted of their ties to Islamic schools. In late 2002, a handful among the country's 47,000 Islamic schools were discovered to have had ties to militants responsible for the October 2002 bombings in Bali, in which 202 people died, most of them Western tourists. For many analysts, these and other examples lent credence to the charge that madrasas are "jihad factories" and outposts of a backward-looking medievalism (see e.g. Haqqani 2002).

Against this troubled backdrop, the contributors to this volume seek to shed light on the culture, practices, and politics of madrasas and Islamic higher education. The authors were participants in a ten-month Working Group on Madrasas and Muslim Education that, with the generous support of the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs (CURA) at Boston University, came together in October 2004 and May 2005 to examine the past, present, and likely future of Islamic education. Our concern was not with general or secular education, but with institutions charged with transmitting Islamic knowledge and disciplines. The approach we adopted was comparative and theoretically eclectic, on the assumption that Islamic education is a total social phenomenon, in which knowledge, politics, and social networks interact in a complex and "generative" (Barth 1993, 5, 341) manner. The Working Group was organized with an eye toward interdisciplinary collaboration and included scholars from history, political science, anthropology, religious studies, and education.

Although the story told by each author in this book is as different as the case study in question, the contributors share two points of view. The first is the conviction that Islamic education is characterized, not by lock-step uniformity, but by a teaming plurality of actors, institutions, and ideas. Islamic schooling is today carried out by government and nongovernment organizations, and its purpose and organization are matters of great debate. At the heart of the dispute lie two important questions: just what is required to live as an observant Muslim in the modern world? And who is qualified to provide instruction in this matter? Disputation of this sort, in which different groups argue publicly about who they are and what their institutions should do, is a clear sign that the madrasa is anything but unchanging or medieval. On the contrary, Islamic education has been drawn squarely into the reflexive questioning and public-cultural debate so characteristic of modern plural societies. Indeed, if there is a struggle for the hearts and minds of Muslims taking place around the world, which there certainly is, madrasas and religious education are on its front line.

This first point leads to a second. The members of the Working Group felt it important not to allow the sound and fury of recent political events to obscure the fact that this contest for Muslim hearts and minds began

well before the Western media rediscovered madrasas in the late 1990s. In Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and India, the debate over Islamic education was already underway two centuries ago. In Southeast Asia and West Africa, the issue has been in the air for over a century. Not surprisingly, then, the central issues in this debate do not concern the Israel-Palestine conflict or American actions in Iraq, but what might at first appear as blandly prosaic matters: whether Islamic schools should teach modern science, provide training in philosophy as well as theology, or offer instruction on modern politics and citizenship. Although their respective positions vary, all sides in these debates are preoccupied with matters of a different nature than those that concerned believers in the Muslim Middle Ages (1000–1500 CE), when the first madrasas came into existence.

Whatever its roots in Islamic tradition, then, the madrasa is now thoroughly embedded in the modern world. The chapters that follow address the modernity of madrasas and Muslim education from four primary angles. They examine the variety of madrasas and other institutions of Islamic learning; the transformation of madrasas and Islamic higher education under the influence of modern social and intellectual developments; the state's efforts to reform Islamic education; and the future of Islamic education in an age of globalization and pluralization.

As this last point implies, a particularly important issue with which all of the contributors to this volume are concerned is the question of how Muslim authorities have responded to the distinctive pluralism of our age. This social pluralism differs from that attributed to earlier societies, in which "two or more elements or social orders . . . live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit" (Furnivall 1944, 446). The plurality that marks our contemporary world is not the colonial and segregationist pluralism Furnivall describes. Today's world is marked by a pervasive "mingling" of peoples, objects, and ideas. Markets, media, and social movements now spill over the boundaries of nations and communities. The spillage makes it impossible to speak, as social theorists once did, of a "society" neatly coinciding with a single "culture," both tied to the same bounded territory (Barth 1993; Hannerz 1992, 262; Hefner 2001). The flow of people and ideas across social borders has fragmented identities, destabilized social hierarchies, and challenged all traditions of knowledge and faith.

The aim of this introductory chapter is to examine just how these late-modern developments have impacted the forms, transmission, and meanings of Islamic knowledge. To explore this question, we need first to know something of the social milieu in which Islamic education earlier developed. This historical background allows us to appreciate the scale of the changes now taking place in Islamic education, and their implications for public culture and politics.

The transmission of Islamic knowledge was always dependent on the support of social and political authorities. Embedded as it was in specific social arrangements, religious education changed as the society in which it was located did. The institutions involved in the transmission of Islamic knowledge, however, did not shift with every new wind that blew across the landscape. The traditions with which Muslim scholars (ʻulama) were concerned included many viewed as divinely revealed. Scholars and teachers had to balance their efforts to demonstrate the urgent relevance of God's message, then, with a normatively "conservational" (Eickelman 1985, 58) preservation of its eternal truths.

Striking a balance between conservationalism and relevance has not always been easy. Religious scholars disagreed as to what knowledge should be foregrounded, and to what social ends it should be put. Rulers and viziers also had their own ideas as to the forms and purposes of religious education. Although tensions of this sort have been felt throughout Muslim history, in the modern age they have become not intermittent but chronic. The last two centuries have been marked by the appearance of a powerfully interventionist state, with educational ambitions distinct from those of the ʻulama. The period has also witnessed a heightened pluralism within and beyond the Muslim community. No less significant, our age has been characterized by the unparalleled ascent of Western powers, with their markets, media, and technologies of knowledge. Those involved in the transmission of Islamic disciplines could not but feel the impact of these world-transforming changes.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Muslim scholars struggled to come to terms with events that they had not authored and that they could no longer ignore. The answers they devised to their altered circumstance changed the face of Islamic education and society. It is this historical fact that gives Islamic education its importance. Islamic schools are not merely institutions for teaching and training young believers. They are the forges from which will flow the ideas and actors for the Muslim world's future. This book is concerned with the diverse meanings and effects of this effort.

Knowledge as Worship

The study and transmission of religious knowledge (*ʻilm*) have always been at the heart of Islamic tradition. Islam is a religion of the Book and of religious commentary, and most Muslims regard religious study as a form of worship in its own right. In principle, every Muslim is enjoined to acquire a basic knowledge of God's words and injunctions as revealed in the Qur'an, the canonical words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (*hadith*), and the "path" (shariʻa) or the law God has pro-

vided as a guide for human conduct. From earliest times, the transmission of knowledge from teacher to disciple also created the network of religious leaders who—in the absence of an initiatic clergy and an institutionalized Church like that of the Christian West—came to exercise religious authority in the Muslim community. Like Aristotle in the ancient world, Muslim authorities also regarded ethical education as essential for the formation of virtuous subjects and the maintenance of a common good (Arjomand 1999, 266; cf. Mahmood 2005, 136). For all these reasons, then, the transmission of religious learning lay at the heart of Muslim civilization, and its support was incumbent on all who aspired to social and political leadership.

Although the transmission of knowledge has long been central to Islamic culture, the institutions through which this transmission takes place have changed over time. Since the Muslim world's Middle Period or Middle Ages (roughly 1000–1500), the institution most directly involved in the transmission of religious knowledge has been the madrasa, a kind of seminary or "college" for Islamic sciences. Today in the Arabic-speaking Middle East, the term madrasa can refer to a general as well as a religious school. However, in earlier times and in many non-Arabic countries still today, the phrase typically refers to an institution offering intermediate and advanced instruction in the Islamic sciences. The religious subjects with which the madrasa dealt included Qur'an recitation (*qira'a*), Arabic grammar (*nahw*), Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsir*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the sources of the law (*usul al-fiqh*), and didactic theology (*kalam*). In a few settings, medieval madrasas also provided instruction in nonreligious topics, including arithmetic, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and poetry (Bulliet 1994).

With its emphasis on intermediate and advanced religious study, the madrasa was always distinguished from institutions that provided elementary religious instruction, such as the knowledge required to recite but not understand the Qur'an. Although its name and social form vary, in the Arab world the institution most commonly associated with the latter task was the *kuttab*. Kuttabs taught youth to memorize and recite the Qur'an, skills regarded as first steps in a scholar's formation (Eickelman 1985, 50, and this volume). Historical evidence indicates that a kuttab-like institution emerged in the first century of the Islamic era, not long after scholars working at the instruction of the Caliphs 'Umar (634–44) and 'Uthman (644–56) completed their recensions of the Qur'an (Bulliet 1994, 28).

The madrasa developed only three centuries later. The first is thought to have originated in the tenth century, not in the Arab heartland, but in the province of Khurasan in eastern Iran. From there it spread widely, reaching Baghdad in 1063, Damascus in the 1090s, Cairo in the 1170s,

and Spain and northern India in the first decades of the thirteenth century (Bulliet 1994, 148–9). In the second half of the eleventh century, the great Seljuq vizier, Nizam al-Mulk, established eleven madrasas in Iraq and Syria (Arjomand 1999, 269–70). By the twelfth century the madrasa had become "perhaps the most characteristic religious institution of the medieval Near Eastern urban landscape" (Berkey 2003, 187; this volume). The institution trained many of Muslim society's leading lights, including jurists, religious scholars, and, in some countries, mathematicians, medical doctors, and astronomers. In all these regards, the madrasa was *the* central institution of medieval Muslim civil society (Arjomand 1999; Hoexter 2002).

Prior to the historical emergence of madrasas, advanced study in the religious sciences was already taking place, but it does not appear to have been systematized and standardized to the degree that it would be after the rise of the madrasa. The setting in which advanced study had earlier taken place was the informal study circle or *halqa* (pl., *halaq*). Study circles were organized in homes, mosques, or shops under the auspices of a master scholar (*shaykh*). By the eighth and ninth centuries, the growing complexity of religious knowledge, especially that associated with the legal schools (*madhahib*) coming into being at this time, meant that advanced learning required more prolonged periods of study (Berkey 1992, 7; Makdisi 1981). In these changed circumstances, mosques specializing in advanced study built hostels for resident students. The tenth-century madrasa took this innovation one step further, providing classrooms, dormitories, and wash rooms for students, all of whom in this early period were male.[2]

Eventually, the typical madrasa came to include instructional rooms; residences for the founder, teachers, and students; and a mosque, which was used for study as well as worship. Many complexes also had mausoleums, where the school's founder and his relatives were entombed (Hillenbrand 1986, 1,139). Not unlike cults of sainthood in Western Christianity (Brown 1981), these burial complexes became the object of religious pilgrimage (*ziyarah*) by Muslims convinced that the founder could intercede with God and serve as a channel for divine grace (baraka; see Taylor 1999, 127–67). In modern times, Muslim reformists have prohibited venerational practices of this sort, and madrasas of reformist disposition dispense with the tomb complex entirely (see e.g., Metcalf 1982, 157).

In the latter half of the thirteenth century, events in Iran ushered in yet another phase in madrasa development, with the appearance of what Said Amir Arjomand (1999) has aptly described as the "educational charitable complex." Created by a single deed of endowment, the new complex included not just the familiar mosque, madrasa, and founder's residence, but a hospital, Sufi convent, and even public baths or an astronomical observatory (Arjomand 1999, 272). The educational charitable

complex soon spread from Iran to Mamluk Syria and Egypt. Few societies at the periphery of the Near East, however, adopted the full complex, with its distinctive clustering of welfare services, nonreligious learning, and madrasa instruction. Indeed, even in the Near East and northern India, the question of whether madrasa should provide instruction in subjects like mathematics and philosophy was controversial, and the dispute was reflected in the curricula of rival madrasa systems (see e.g., Robinson 2001, 14).

Funding and Functionalization

Since madrasas typically did not charge tuition, the funds required for their operations had to come from sources other than the student body. Most funding was derived from religious endowments provided by local notables. The legal basis for these pious endowments centered on the well-known institution of the *waqf* (pl., *awqaf*). A waqf is a private endowment set aside in perpetuity for the purpose of providing funds for some public good or service, typically of a religious nature (Kahf 1995). In medieval times, those who established waqf for madrasas included rulers, governors, merchants, and members of the military and civilian elite.

For the purposes of comparison with Islamic education today, it is interesting to note that even in medieval times the state's role in madrasa funding varied. The state everywhere provided the legal guarantees that allowed for madrasas to operate. But the state's contribution to madrasa endowments differed in a manner that reflected the broader balance of power between state and society. Where, as in northeastern Iran in the tenth and eleventh centuries, civil society was strong, landed aristocrats and other nonstate notables led the way in founding and managing madrasas. "It is an indication of the vigor and assertiveness of the patrician civil society . . . that its members competed with the rulers, at times defiantly, in the founding of madrasas" (Arjomand 1999, 268). Elsewhere, however, as in Iraq during the Seljuq Empire (1040) or Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks (Berkey 1992; Chamberlain 1994), rulers led the way in establishing madrasas. In these countries, court officials even made appointments of professors to endowed chairs.

State meddling in madrasa appointments reflected a broader influence in the political economy of the Muslim Near East. In Mamluk Egypt and Syria, the ruling elite was of Turkic background, while most of their subjects were Arab. The Turkic rulers patronized madrasas in an effort to bolster their legitimacy in the eyes of the local population, which often regarded its alien lords skeptically. The rulers also used patronage to atomize patrician households that might otherwise make trouble for the ruling family (Berkey 1992, 45, 116–8; Chamberlain 1994, 91–107).

In an important book on Islamic education in contemporary Egypt, the anthropologist Gregory Starrett has coined the term "functionalizaton" to describe the process by which elements of Islamic tradition like the madrasa, with their own histories and discourses, "come to serve the strategic or utilitarian ends of another discourse" (Starrett 1998, 9). Starrett illustrates his concept of functionalization with reference to Islamic education in contemporary Egypt. There state-sponsored programs of religious education disseminate a "synoptic and systematized 'Islam' " (ibid.) compatible with the interests of the government, even if at variance with the views of some religious scholars.

Historical examples like those from medieval Syria and Egypt are useful, however, because they remind us that the functionalization of Islamic education is not something new, but characterized the political-economy of madrasa operations from the start. Kings, viziers, and civilian elites patronized madrasas to demonstrate their own high standing and to ensure that the message coming from the scholarly community remained friendly. Medieval rulers' interest in madrasas, however, was not limited to narrowly political ends. The eleventh-century Seljuq vizier, Nizam al-Mulk, founded his network of madrasas to strengthen Sunni orthodoxy against a newly ascendant Shi'ism. In other lands and in other times, court officials used their patronage of madrasas to promote one sectarian school against its rivals. In territories at the frontiers of Muslim expansion, rulers and other elites patronized madrasas to promote orthodoxy among Muslim converts still only nominally conversant with the details of their faith (Brenner 2001; Grandin 1997; Dhofier 1999).

In the nineteenth and twentieth century, rulers in Qajar Iran (Menashri 1992, 29; Ringer 2001, 245) and the Ottoman Empire (Fortna 2000, 85) attempted to functionalize Islamic education for a new and distinctly modern end: creating a broadly shared public culture for the purposes of nation building. Some of these rulers intervened directly in madrasa affairs. Anxious not to antagonize the madrasa establishment, however, other leaders tried to outflank the 'ulama by founding elementary schools of their own. Whatever the option pursued, the modern state ended the 'ulama monopoly on education, and raised questions about schools and authority that have remained at the heart of Muslim politics to this day.

Muslim Universities?

A generation ago, historians of Islamic education concluded that the madrasa's classrooms, degrees (*ijaza*), professorships, and endowed properties were proof that madrasas were the Muslim equivalent of the medieval West's universities (Makdisi 1981). In one sense this comparison is apt, in that it underscores that monotheist education was central to high public

culture in both the Muslim and Western worlds, something which was by no means the case for all Old World civilizations.

Seen from another angle, however, the equation of the madrasa with the medieval Western university is misleading. Notwithstanding its classrooms and professorships, the madrasa of the high Middle Ages had little of the Western university's corporate identity or centrally coordinated administration. Madrasas in this period also operated without the benefit of examinations, formal curricula, degrees, or college governance. In fact, until well into the modern period, the pursuit of religious knowledge in Muslim societies was an individual or, more precisely, networked undertaking, in which students sought out master scholars for personalized instruction. The fact that a teacher might hold an endowed professorship at a particular institution mattered little to the overall transmission of religious knowledge. Over the course of his academic career, a student might study with several teachers and at several different madrasas. His eventual professional standing depended, not on a degree awarded by a particular university, but on the reputation of his teachers and the line of scholars from which they were descended.

By comparison with Western Europe's examination-giving and degree-granting universities, then, religious education in the premodern Muslim world remained "persistently informal" (Berkey 2003, and below). Although students might be awarded a degree (ijaza) of sorts, this was neither a certification of courses taken nor a title conferring membership in some corporate community of scholars or clergy. The ijaza was first and foremost an "emblem of a bond to a shaykh" (Chamberlain 1994, 89). Inasmuch as this was so, the criterion for choosing where to study was not the reputation of a college but the brilliance of the shaykh under whom one hoped to study. As an elderly Moroccan scholar told the anthropologist Dale Eickelman in the late 1960s, students were enjoined to seek out a teacher who "had God's blessings in the religious sciences and feared God the most, those who were older and more powerful and who always had their hands kissed in the street" (Eickelman 1985, 105). The religious scholar was important because he linked the student to a chain of transmission reaching back through time to the moment of revelation itself. As with so many other aspects of the Islamic tradition, the informal and networked quality of religious education was to undergo a great transformation in the modern period.

Recentering Islam

Although the madrasa differed from the medieval European university, the institution's diffusion across the medieval Muslim world was an event

of world-making importance. An earlier generation of historians observed that the establishment of madrasas in the Sunni Near East coincided with political advances by Shi'i states in the same region. The celebrated historian of Muslim civilization, Marshall Hodgson, observed that the spread of madrasas was part of a larger "Sunni revival" that sought to counteract a growing Shi'i advance (1974, 2:45–49). In the face of this threat, Hodgson argued, Sunni madrasas trained individuals for service in the state establishment. Other scholars have taken exception to Hodgson's claim, pointing out that there is little evidence that madrasas were directly involved in the training of state officials (Makdisi 1981; cf. Chamberlain 1994, 70).

Whatever the precise nature of the training offered, there can be no question that the rise of the madrasa in the medieval Muslim world was part of a far-reaching reorientation and disciplining of religious knowledge and authority. The event offers lessons for our efforts to understand the changes taking place in Muslim education today. As Berkey (1992), Chamberlain (1994), and Bulliet (1994) have shown, the spread of the madrasa was part of a great "recentering and homogenization" of Islamic knowledge and authority (Berkey 2003, 189). The signs of this change were visible in several social fields. First, jurisprudence (fiqh) became the centerpiece of 'ulama learning and the queen of the religious sciences. Second, even if most learning continued to take place in informal study circles under the guidance of a revered shaykh, a written canon came to play an increasingly important role in young scholars' training. Heightened emphasis on the mastery of this canon did not do away with the emphasis on voice and orality so critical to the study of the Qur'an and traditionalist commentaries. These have remained key features of traditionalist Islamic education to this day (Bowen 1993; Messick 1993). The significance of the change lay instead in what it implied for the definition and control of religious knowledge. The now tightened linkage of scholarly standing to master teachers and canonical texts created clearer criteria for identifying just who did and who did not count as a legitimate religious scholar. In other words, one's status within the 'ulama community was now more directly dependent on one's command of a written canon, learned under a recognized master, and demonstrated in textual and oral performance. Madrasas alone were not responsible for this standardization of 'ulama status and knowledge. But they contributed vitally to the change.

This shift in knowledge and authority offers lessons on how we might think about the changes taking place in Islamic higher education today, especially as regards questions of orthodoxy in religious life. As Talal Asad has observed, orthodoxy is "not a mere body of opinion but a distinctive relationship—a relationship of power . . . to regulate, uphold, re-

quire or adjust *correct* practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine, or replace *incorrect* ones" (Asad 1986, 14). Seen from this perspective, the spread of the madrasas was part of a heightened orthodoxy brought about through a great recentering of Islamic tradition. The recentering had to do, first, with the establishment of stricter controls for recognizing just who counted as a religious authority. "The 'ulama . . . sought to restrict the ability of individuals who possessed only a modicum of intellectual training, or who might even be illiterate, but who nonetheless claimed considerable religious authority among the uneducated masses, to define for their audiences what was properly Islamic" (Berkey 2003, 229). The recentering also had to do with just what counted as Islamic knowledge. "The development of a homogeneous corpus of authoritative Islamic texts . . . contributed greatly to a growing uniformity of Islamic belief and practice throughout the vast area in which Muslims lived" (Bulliet 1994, 21).

Of course, the broader distribution of knowledge and authority in Muslim societies was still more complex than these thumbnail characterizations imply. Historical studies and modern ethnographies indicate that, beyond 'ulama circles, nonstandard streams of religious knowledge continued to be studied and transmitted. After all, the peoples of the Muslim Middle Ages were still predominantly rural, and 98–99 percent of them were illiterate (Findley 1989, 130). Even in twelfth-century Cairo, "a city of schools" (Berkey 1992, 45), one did not have to travel far beyond the madrasa to stumble on to personalities whose behavior seemed to defy the 'ulama canon. The famous *shaykh ummi* offers a particularly striking example. This colorful figure

> came from a humble social background, and so had not had access to much in the way of education. The attitude of such figures toward books and the 'inscripted' culture of the 'ulama was, at least on the surface, dismissive: the Sufi master prevailing upon a learned disciple to dispose of all his books was a trope of Sufi literature. The *shaykh ummi* might or might not be literally illiterate, but he claimed a kind of 'knowledge' that he had acquired, not from books, but from dreams, or visions of the Prophet, or more vaguely from his 'heart.' The *shaykh ummi* might seek to transmit that knowledge to his pupils, but in a language or style which itself was alien to the discourse of the jurists and the more learned Sufis. (Berkey 1992, 244)

Elsewhere, as in Damascus during the medieval period, a visitor might stumble on even more flamboyant displays of uncanonical behavior. "Radical dervishes ostentatiously flouted social and religious norms: dressing in rags or (in some cases) not at all; shaving off hair, beard, moustache, and eyebrows, in violations of conventions rooted in the *Sunna*; deliberately disregarding cultic practices such as prayer; publicly indulging in the use of hashish and other intoxicants; and, according to numer-

ous reports, piercing various bodily parts, including their genitals" (Berkey 2003, 245). One might be tempted to dismiss examples like these as the bizarre antics of underclass eccentrics. Apparently, however, the popular Islamic scene was not nearly so standardized as such an assumption would imply, for "these flamboyant ascetics and mendicants also attracted the patronage of the powerful" (Berkey 2003, 245).

The development of madrasas in the high Middle Ages, then, facilitated a canonization of knowledge and a recentering of religious authority. Outside of 'ulama circles, however, less standardized traditions survived, some of them in seeming tension with the new scholarly orthodoxy (Berkey 2003, 244; Bulliet 1994, 173–4). If this was the case in late medieval Damascus and Cairo, it is easy to imagine that it was even more the case in territories like West Africa, western Anatolia, the Balkans, Bengal, Kazakhstan, and the Indonesian archipelago, areas drawn into the Muslim fold after the events of the high medieval period. Natives in these late-converting territories maintained nonstandard traditions well into the modern era. Like the famous *abangan* Muslims of mid-twentieth-century Java (Geertz 1960), adherents of these traditions usually insisted that their spirit cults and ritual venerations were thoroughly Islamic, notwithstanding 'ulama opinion to the contrary. We know from anthropological studies in other modern Muslim societies, like Mayotte in the Comoros Islands (Lambek 1993) or the Gayo Highlands in Sumatra, Indonesia (Bowen 1993), that many such nonstandard traditions of Islamic knowledge flourished right up into recent times. Although mainstream 'ulama might dismiss these popular traditions as un-Islamic, these "claims of mutual exclusion are transcended in the practice of ordinary people" (Lambek 1993, 61).

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, Muslim societies experienced powerful new pressures to recenter and standardize their still-plural traditions of religious knowledge. The effort was the greatest seen since the birth of the madrasa in the high Middle Ages, and was linked to the expansion of mass education and movements of religious reform. These two events converged to create conditions in which more people than ever were educated in Islam, not just through the informal interactions of everyday life, but through schools run by either state officials or reform-minded Muslims. As Gregory Starrett has observed of modern Egypt, "the expansion and transfer of religious socialization from private to newly created public sector institutions . . . led to a comprehensive revision of the way Egyptians treat Islam" (1998, 6). In Egypt and elsewhere, these developments encouraged growing numbers of believers to think of their faith as objective, systemic, and exclusive. Often as not, these new ways of understanding Islam were especially exclusive of popular traditions of religious knowledge.

The recentering of Islam in modern times, then, has taken advantage of the modern governance, print and electronic media, and mass education to reach beyond the ranks of the ʻulama into the consciousness and lifeways of ordinary Muslims. Notwithstanding the ambitions of state officials and religious reformists, however, the efforts have not, everywhere, gone as planned. The recentering has been accompanied by a new pluralization of knowledge and authority, and new arguments over how to be a Muslim in this most challenging of eras.

Making Modern Muslims

Historians, anthropologists, and sociologists have long emphasized that schooling has played a central role in the making of modern nations, citizens, and religion. It was through a gradually expanding program of mass education that, over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a disparate assortment of regionalized peasants were turned into Frenchmen (Weber 1976). It was through a similarly expansive program of mass education that Japan's provincial populations came to shift their allegiances from feudal lords to the emperor and the idea of Japan (Marshall 1994).

State-sponsored systems of mass education have been key ingredients in the Muslim experience of political modernity as well. Modern Muslim rulers have followed the example of their Western and East Asian counterparts and attempted to create a citizenry defined by a common culture and national identity. These rulers, however, have also had to grapple with civilizationally specific questions: where Islam fits into the idea of the nation, and whether to incorporate the ʻulama and their schools into the state-sponsored educational system. Different Muslim rulers have adopted different tacks toward these problems. Everywhere, however, their efforts have challenged received traditions of Islamic knowledge, created new knowledge-elites apart from the ʻulama, and deepened the debate over the social meanings of Islam.

The timing and organization of this *étatization* of Islamic education have also varied in different societies. In the most powerful Muslim state at the dawn of the modern era, the Ottoman Empire, the "modernization" of religious education had actually begun several centuries before the Western powers achieved military supremacy over their Ottoman rival. Educational modernity here was not, then, a postcolonial effect of Western rule. After Turkish armies moved into western Anatolia in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries (culminating with the capture of Constantinople in 1453), the Sultan established madrasas (Turk., medrese) throughout the conquered territory, sometimes in churches confiscated

from the defeated Christian population (Veinstein 1997, 71). From the start, madrasas and 'ulama were harnessed to the wagon of the Ottoman state. In the late fifteenth century, Ottoman authorities regularized and centralized the madrasas in their core territories. They classified and ranked religious schools in a strict hierarchy. Ottoman officials also established educational criteria whereby scholars passed from lower to higher ranks in the religious hierarchy (Veinstein 1997, 73). Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66) added another level to the madrasa hierarchy, designated the *mufti* of Istanbul the first among all 'ulama, and regularized the procedures whereby select 'ulama were recruited to government service. The rationalization of Islamic education reached a crescendo in the eighteenth century, with eleven levels of madrasas differentiated by prestige, teaching staff, and salary (Veinstein 1997, 24–6).

By this time, however, Ottoman power had begun to decline, and government officials began to appreciate that Western Europe had developed a military and technological edge over its long-time rival. The sultan's advisors concluded that the "secret wisdom" behind the European advantage was education. In a pattern of defensive military reform also seen in nineteenth-century Egypt (Starrett 1998, 26–30) and Iran (Ringer 2001, 7), Ottoman officials responded with educational initiatives aimed at narrowing the gap with the West (Fortna 2000, 12). They established a naval (1773) and army (1793) academy, recruiting Western Europeans as instructors. In the following century, state officials opened schools of medicine (1827), civil administration (1859), and law (1878). "Optimism in the transformative power of new-style schooling energized the entire Ottoman political spectrum" (Fortna 2000, 5).

It is important to emphasize that these educational reforms took place outside of, rather than in collaboration with, the existing madrasa system. The new Ottoman academies looked to Western Europe rather than Muslim madrasas for their educational model, a fact that caused not a little unhappiness in 'ulama circles. The Ottoman Education Regulation of 1869, which provided guidelines for programs of mass education, was based on a report drafted a few years earlier for Ottoman authorities by the French Ministry of Education (Fortna 2000, 15).

The relationship between the new schools and religious education was not entirely dualistic, however. As ties between the Ottomans and Western powers deteriorated in the final decades of the nineteenth century, Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) launched educational programs that combined new forms of European administration and pedagogy with instruction on Islamic and Ottoman history. Renewed emphasis on religious and moral instruction "was perhaps the defining characteristic" of Abdülhamid's educational agenda (Fortna 2000, 241), and the program was carried out with the direct assistance of state-based 'ulama.

Although the content of late Ottoman education was not purely secular, then, the fact remains that the state opted *not* to construct its new educational edifice on a madrasa foundation. State officials "believed that positive, rational science" offered the best solution for the country's problems (Fortna 2000, 85). Equally important, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, conservative 'ulama had rebuffed proposals for reform presented by the Ministry of Education. It was only in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire that the state was finally allowed to launch an ambitious program of madrasa reform. In 1900, the state opened a Western-style Faculty of Theology in Istanbul; in 1908, it created a new type of state school for training madrasa instructors; and in 1910 it introduced instruction in general subjects (mathematics, history, literature) into madrasas (Jacob 1997, 111–2).

By this time, however, the system of general education had also brought a new class of Western-educated young Turks into being, and many of these graduates were impatient with the pace of national reforms. The shock of defeat in World War I and the occupation of large parts of Anatolia by Allied forces caused a political crisis so severe that the new Turkish elite resolved to restructure the educational system once and for all. Not long after the declaration of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), the Republic's founder and first president, abolished Turkey's madrasas, replacing them with a School of Theology and thirty-three schools for training religious officials. Over the next few years, his administration eliminated religious instruction entirely from public education, reversing most of Abdülhamid's reforms. After Kemal's death in 1948, the state reintroduced religious education into its schools, and higher religious education (under strict state supervision) was again allowed. Private religious education remained tightly controlled. Indeed, as Bekim Agai shows in his essay in this volume, religious education remains under strict state supervision to this day, even if many of the staunchly *laicist* policies of the Ataturk era have been put aside.

The Ottoman case is a particularly dramatic example of an educational crisis that swept most of the Muslim world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. No other Muslim-majority country undertook a program of educational étatization as radical as that of Republican Turkey. Nonetheless state meddling in religious education was the rule rather than the exception. In countries that managed to avoid colonization by the West, educational trends more closely resembled those of the late Ottoman Empire than its republican successor. In nineteenth-century Iran, for example, the Qajar rulers responded to the disastrous losses of the first Russo-Persian War of 1803–15 with a program of defensive military reform. French officers came to Iran to instruct troops in European military arts (Ringer 2001, 20). In the 1810s, small numbers of students from elite

families were sent to France and Britain to master subjects also related to military affairs (Menashri 1992, 46–51; Ringer 2001, 33). In 1851, the Academy of Applied Sciences was established, the first state-sponsored European-style school (Ringer 2001, 67–108). The school's curriculum was again "predominantly military in nature" (Ringer 2001, 75). Only a tiny number of elite youth were involved in the Academy and overseas education, and the 'ulama monopoly on education remained secure. More conservative 'ulama nonetheless took exception to parts of the European-style curriculum, such as its heretical ideas on the heliocentric nature of our solar system (Ringer 2001, 104; cf. Menashri 1992, 61–2).

Fearing 'ulama opposition and the contagious spread of European political ideas, Naser al-Din Shah turned down his advisors' recommendations that the state launch a program of mass educational reform (Ringer 2001, 153). Private citizens responded to the decision by establishing European-style schools of their own. During the 1880s, there were numerous incidents in which conservative 'ulama and their students attacked the new schools, on grounds that they were heretical. Nonetheless the new school movement gained momentum, and even won the support of some low-level 'ulama (Ringer 2001, 180). By the end of the nineteenth century, the Iranian 'ulama had effectively lost their monopoly hold on education. But Iran's educational reformers were still unable to initiate reforms in the madrasa system itself (Menashri 1992, 64; Ringer 2001, 271).

Developments in Egypt showed a similar push-and-pull between the state and 'ulama-led madrasas. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Albanian-born Muhammad 'Ali followed the lead of his Istanbul counterparts by establishing schools for military training (1816), engineering (1820), medicine (1827), and civil administration (1829). As with the Ottomans, the looming threat of European intervention ensured that most of these educational initiatives focused on improving military readiness. In the 1820s, Egyptian officials tried to recruit boys from the existing system of Qur'anic schools (kuttab) to the new preparatory and technical schools. However, as it became clear that one of the purposes of the new schools was to draft graduates into military service, enrollments plummeted. State officials then resolved to establish schools of their own (Starrett 1998, 26–8). After a series of military disasters in 1863, however, the state's attempts to organize a system of preparatory schools collapsed. Efforts to restart the general system in the 1870s also foundered, so that responsibility for basic education in Egypt continued to lie with the country's five thousand kuttabs. Despite some tinkering at the margins, these latter institutions remained educationally unreformed.

In 1882, the British took control of Egypt. They quickly realized that they needed to make use of at least some Islamic schools. However, they were equally convinced that it was essential that they not educate too

many Egyptians. The British experience in India a few years earlier had convinced them that education beyond elementary school only heightened native restlessness. Egyptian youths given the opportunity to study in the few kuttab that doubled as elementary schools, then, were not encouraged to go on in their studies (Starrett 1998, 31). Beginning in 1895, forty-six of the country's five thousand kuttabs were provided with subsidies on the condition that they provide increased instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic (Starrett 1998, 47). Any broader reformation of Islamic education, however, remained out of the question.

As was the case here in Egypt after 1882, from the late nineteenth century on, the primary determinant of educational reform in most Muslim countries was not a native *dirigiste* regime like that of Mustapha Kemal or Muhammad 'Ali, but Western colonialism. The precise impact of colonialism on education varied, however, depending on the new rulers' school policies and the attitude of surviving religious and political elites toward educational reform. However different their details, the educational transformations in the broader Muslim world all had one thing in common. The 'ulama's monopoly on education had been broken once and for all. Notwithstanding the hopes of the European rulers, however, this development did not bring about the decline or privatization of Islam. Rather, the new educational pluralism brought intensified competition between supporters of general as opposed to religious education, and fierce public debate over the place of Islam in an imagined postcolonial community.

Colonizing Education

The contrast between Morocco and India illustrates how varied colonialism's impact on Islamic education could be. From the 1830s on, the French intervened directly in Moroccan political affairs. At first, however, "higher education thrived and was alive with attempts at reform," as a result of the collaborative efforts of religious scholars and native officials (Eickelman 1985, 3; this volume). Mathematics, engineering, and astronomy were reintroduced as subjects of instruction, and some men of religious learning were dispatched to Europe for study. Crowned by two mosque universities, the Islamic educational system continued to attract the children of the political and religious elite well into the 1930s, when it began a sudden decline.

As Eickelman explains in this volume, the sudden decline was the result of several influences. French restrictions on the pious endowments used for financing madrasas was one factor (cf. Eickelman 1985, 82). Another was the authorities' transformation of the two main mosque universities

into state-controlled institutions (Eickelman 1985, 161; this volume). But the decline in religious education also reflected a more general development, one common in other Muslim societies in the early twentieth century. The change reflected a shift in the perceived hierarchy of education, expressed in the conviction that European-style education was a better road to upward mobility than Islamic education. "Studies in a mosque-university ceased to be an effective means of social advancement," Eickelman writes. "The consequence was to leave the mosque-universities primarily to poor students of rural origin" (Eickelman 1985, 163). The 'ulama and their schools enjoyed the respect of rural Moroccans for many more years (Eickelman 1985, 165, 171; this volume). Nonetheless, the politico-religious elite's desertion of the madrasas shattered the once-close tie of religious education to high social standing.

The Moroccan example is unusual, not so much because of this elite defection, but because there was so little organized religious opposition to the change. The fact that the Moroccan royal family, an icon of local Islam, embraced European-style education seems to have reassured the public that the new schooling was not tantamount to repudiating one's ethnoreligious identity. In other colonial settings, the accommodation of Muslim elites to European-style education proved more difficult. Some groups celebrated the new Western education while others retreated to madrasas, which they hoped to use as a springboard for resistance to the new colonial order. This pattern was no more vigorously expressed than in the homeland of the world's largest Muslim population, India.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Mughal Empire, which had dominated the Indian subcontinent for two hundred years, was in serious decline. In the eighteenth century, the British took advantage of political uncertainties to seize Bengal and Bihar in the east. By 1803 they had moved inland, taking control of northern India's political heartland, and reducing the Mughal emperor to a puppet. By the time of the "Mutiny" of 1857, the British had extended their rule over the whole subcontinent.

The speed of the Mughal collapse and the sectarian diversity of the Muslim community guaranteed that there was to be no unified response to the British advance. As Barbara Metcalf and Muhammad Qasim Zaman have shown, the demise of Muslim rule prompted the development of diverse social movements, not only among 'ulama but among Sufi masters (pirs) and others involved in regional traditions of devotion to the Prophet and Islamic saints (Metcalf 1982, 8, 25; Zaman 2002, 11–13; cf. Hodgson 1974, III, 333; Robinson 2001, 184). The 'ulama were convinced, however, that the primary reason for the Muslim decline had been believers' neglect of God's law. In their eyes, then, the only way forward was for Muslim teachers to promote a renewed commitment to

the law. In the absence of an Islamic state to support this revivalist program, the task fell to the 'ulama. Rather than concentrating their energies on the cultural and political elite as in Mughal times, then, the 'ulama reached out to the broad Muslim public. The result was to be the largest movement for Muslim mass education the world has ever seen.

Notwithstanding their consensus on the importance of religious education, India's 'ulama could not agree on the form the new religious education should take. All of the main movements "produced a virtuosity in new techniques of organization and communication"; all "sought to define a personal sphere in which the *shari'ah* was to be followed"; and all aimed to create a new public identity, "Indian Muslim" (Metcalf 1982, 335). However, groups differed on their target constituencies, patterns of religious authority, and attitudes toward Western schooling. As with the famous modernist educator, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, some scholars directed their appeals to high-born Muslims, emphasizing the need to cooperate with the British and incorporate European arts, sciences, and etiquette into Muslim education (Metcalf 1982, 317–35, and this volume; Zaman 2002). Others, like the Ahl-i-Hadis, rejected Sufism, medieval jurisprudence, and British rule, insisting that the only path forward was a strict commitment to the law, which believers could discover for themselves through study of the Qur'an and Hadith. Still others, like the Farangi Mahall (Metcalf 1982, 29–34; Robinson 2001), developed a new educational curriculum to train an elite class of jurists. The first of these jurists worked for Mughal and post-Mughal Muslim rulers, but later some went on to serve in "Anglo-Mohammedan" courts.

As the essays by Metcalf and Zaman in this volume both demonstrate, however, it was the famous madrasa established at Deoband in 1867 that has come to be regarded as the icon of Islamic educational reform in modern India. From a small base in Deoband, the number of schools grew to 36 by 1900. By 1967 the network (in what had once been British India) had grown to 9,000 schools (Metcalf 1982, 136). In Pakistan alone, the number grew from 150 in 1947 to nearly 10,000 in 2002 (Zaman, this volume).

In recent years, Deobandi fame has grown as a result of the fact that during the 1980s some of Afghanistan's Taliban leadership studied in Deobandi schools in Pakistan. The early Deobandis, however, were not backward-looking medievalists, but cultural brokers for a unique educational hybrid that combined elements of Western education with the 'ulama tradition. What most distinguished the Deobandis from their rivals was their skillful adaptation of British styles of school administration. The first Deobandi school had a library; classrooms; a paid professional staff, many of whom had experience working in government service for the British; and a fixed curriculum complete with examinations (Metcalf 1982, 93). Rather

than relying on pious endowments, the school depended for its finances on contributions from the general public, all of which were carefully recorded and published (Metcalf 1982, 97). Unlike Sayyid Ahmad Khan's modernists, however, the Deobandis distinguished between the social technologies of educational administration and the content of the curriculum. "There were no spokesmen for including English or Western subjects" (Metcalf 1982, 102). Although students were not prohibited from continuing their studies in government schools, few did. This combination of, on one hand, a welcome embrace of Western-style administration and, on the other, ambivalence toward general education was to remain a hallmark of Deobandi schooling for years to come (cf. Zaman 2002).

Success in the emerging Muslim public sphere also required a formula for neutralizing the fractious divisions of ethnicity, language, and social standing that continued to divide Indian Muslims. The Deobandis responded to the challenge by emphasizing the literate tradition of knowledge and the law over and against local traditions and holy men (*pirs*). The Deobandis also popularized markers of high religious standing, by extending styles of dress, learning, and social bearing previously reserved for the Muslim upper classes (*ashraf*) to all those who embraced Deobandi reform (Metcalf 1982, 256). This proved to be an especially appealing formula for India's growing community of urban Muslims.

Indonesia provides a final example of the way in which the arrival of the West impacted religious education. The Indonesian situation differed in one very important respect from that of Muslim India. No army of conquering horse warriors had ever swept through the archipelago. Although a Malayo-Muslim culture had diffused across the region during the first centuries of Islamization (from the thirteenth to sixteenth century), the region had never been united under a single Muslim ruler. As a result, there was no transregional class of ashraf notables whose language, dress, and social etiquette might serve as a model for imagining a new Muslim community. On the contrary, in fact, each of the archipelago's Muslim territories had its own religiopolitical elite and distinctive social styles. Rather than popularizing the status markers of high-born elites as in India, then, the archipelago's reformists promoted a "Malayo-Indonesian" identity that was both populist and transethnic. One of the most striking features of this unusual social hybrid was the ease with which it assimilated cultural forms of diverse provenance, including elements of Western dress, administration, and education.

As Arza, Afrianty, and Hefner explain in their chapter, the colonial peace also allowed for an expansion of Qur'anic schools and residential madrasas into once nominally Islamized portions of the archipelago. In Indonesia as in Mali (see Brenner, this volume), traditionalist and small-scale Qur'anic schools were at the forefront of the Islamization of once

non- or nominally Islamic populations. European rule also intensified competition among the two main Muslim elites, known locally as the "old group" (*kaum tua*) traditionalists and the "new group" (*kaum muda*) modernists. Notwithstanding their sectarian rivalry, both groups came to agree on the importance of educational reform. By the late 1920s, traditionalist and modernist Muslim schools alike were incorporating mathematics, science, history, and European languages into their curricula. This early precedent paved the way for even bolder developments in Islamic education during the last decades of the twentieth century, when Indonesians initiated some of the Muslim world's most ambitious reforms of religious education (see Arza, Afrianty, and Hefner, this volume).

Book Chapters

The chapters in this volume are all concerned, then, with the ideals, practices, and politics of Islamic education in modern times. Chapter 2, by Jonathan Berkey, brings insights from medieval Islam to bear on modern Islamic education. Building on remarks made by Michael Chamberlain (1994), Berkey reminds us that the concept of education, with its neatly demarcated roles, organizations, and programs, is quintessentially modern. Less uniquely modern, he adds, are political elites' habits of patronizing and functionalizing religious education for their own ends.

Berkey also reminds us that the regularization of madrasa learning is not particularly modern. In fact a significant measure of educational rationalization had taken place in medieval times. It reached new heights, however, in the programs of the last and greatest of the Muslim world's medieval military states, the Ottoman Empire. Viewed from this angle, and contrary to many great-divide models of tradition and modernity, the dawn of the "modern" in the Near East began well before the arrival of Europeans, and had "roots at least in part in indigenous developments in the premodern Near East." In their study of renewal and reform in eighteenth-century Islam, Nehemiah Levtzion and John O. Voll (1987) have made a related point, demonstrating that proto-modern movements of Islamic reform had begun well before Westerners arrived. Both of these essays make any facile divide between the precolonial and colonial in the Muslim world highly problematic, and underscore that the pathways to modernity are multiple (Hefner 1999; Eisenstadt 2000).

Berkey's essay also highlights the fact that a particularly important aspect of the objectification of Islam in modern times has been the insistence that there is just one objective and invariant "Islamic law," and a primary ambition of Muslim politics should be its implementation in the form of state-managed legal codes (cf. Zaman 2002, 24). Readers unfamiliar with

Islamic jurisprudence may assume that this is the way the law has always been understood. Building on remarks made by the anthropologist Brinkley Messick (Messick 1993), however, Berkey observes that the idea that one can delimit a precise body of "law" is foreign to premodern Islam, which conceived of God's shari'a more as a "general societal discourse" than a positive legal canon (cf. Hooker 2003; Zubaida 2003).

In chapter 3, Muhammad Qasim Zaman examines the legacy of Islamic schooling in Pakistan, whose madrasas have been the subject of more bad-news mongering than any other. The educational situation in Pakistan, however, is indeed sobering. Madrasas have been linked to the Taliban leadership, bloody attacks in Indian-controlled Kashmir, and, most recently, the London underground bombings in July 2005. As Zaman's essay makes clear, the violence has not just targeted non-Muslims. Several of the more radical madrasas, like the Jami'at al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya in Karachi, first developed an appetite for sectarian violence while coordinating attacks on the Ahmadi community, a small sect regarded as deviationist by most Muslim leaders. In the 1980s, militants involved in the anti-Ahmadi campaign shifted their aim to Pakistan's Shi'a, who make up about 15 percent of the country's population. Once begun, intemperate habits of the heart like these have proved difficult to contain.

Zaman's chapter, however, has more subtle ambitions than just reviewing the dark side of madrasa politics. He invites us to put our modernist eyeglasses to the side and consider what it means to participate in a *tradition* of religious scholarship. Such a tradition is alive and well among Pakistan's 'ulama. Their discourse has its own assumptions, arguments, and textuality, all of which must be drawn into each act of scholarly creation. Within these discursive horizons, however, the tradition also allows a significant measure of innovation and debate, like that attempted by 'Ubayd Allah Sindhi (d. 1943). Much like the late twentieth-century Indonesian scholar, Nurcholish Madjid (Hefner 2000), Sindhi sought to unite Muslims around a platform emphasizing the universal rather than exclusive meaning of Qur'anic values. As also with Indonesia's Madjid, Sindhi wanted the 'ulama to take their national identity seriously and mine its sensibilities to provide the raw materials for a religious ethic that was civil and pluralist.

While revealing the dynamism of madrasa scholarship, Zaman also sheds light on its vulnerabilities vis-à-vis sectarian conflict. Most 'ulama avoid direct participation in violence like that initiated against the Ahmadis and the Shi'a. However, Zaman adds, the "accusation of denying the fundamentals of the faith" is a slippery slope, one that can be "directed against modernist hermeneutics . . . as well as against the Shi'a." Although sectarian discourses may not directly enjoin violence, they "remain available" for followers inclined to see defense of the faith as

grounds for violence. Although the state can attempt to contain such acts, any long-term resolution of this tension will require the hard work of scholars operating within the horizons of the tradition, and directing its discourse toward more civil conclusions (cf. Abou El Fadl 2004, 110).

No comparison better illustrates the contextual relativity of modern Islamic education than that of Pakistan and India. As Barbara Metcalf's essay makes clear (chapter 4), contemporary India's madrasas grew out of the same nineteenth-century movements of Islamic reform as did Pakistan's. But today the situation of madrasas in the two countries could hardly be more different. The 1947 partition left Indian Muslims, who had earlier been one-quarter of British India's population, just 10 percent of the total (12 percent today). The violence of the partition placed Muslims who stayed behind in India under "an atmosphere of suspicion," their loyalty to India forever in question. At times the tension explodes into anti-Muslim violence, as was most recently illustrated in the anti-Muslim pogroms in Gujarat during March 2002 (cf. Brass 2003). In these vulnerable circumstances, madrasas have come to be identified, not with the struggle to create an Islamic state, but with the cultural reproduction of an imperiled identity.

As a result of these challenges, Muslim educators in India have preserved their nineteenth-century predecessors' concern with forging identity and maintaining piety "apart from political life." Far more than their counterparts in Pakistan, Indian Muslim scholars have embraced the ideals of secular democracy. Most Indian madrasas have also incorporated the national educational curriculum into their programs. In some states the process has been assisted by government madrasa boards. As in Indonesia (see Azra, Afrianty, and Hefner, this volume), however, the reform has also been driven by the desires of parents who hope that their children might be modern and prosperous as well as pious.

Metcalf's essay makes several other points relevant for this volume's broader themes. She points out, for example, that madrasas fulfill social functions other than providing religious education. Among other things, they serve as centers where people go for advice on Islamic legal matters and for guidance from Sufi saints. Metcalf comments on a trend also apparent in Indonesia, the growing feminization of madrasa enrollments. Here in India, Metcalf reports, the trend seems to be linked to parents' and educators' concerns to create pious, "demure," and "competent homemakers." Interestingly, Muslim schools in Indonesia show a similarly gendered trend, but they are far less reluctant to prepare women for employment outside the home.

No institution is more universally identified with Islamic higher education than is the famous al-Azhar university (est. 1171) in Egypt. Malika Zeghal's essay in this volume (chapter 5) reminds us of just how excep-

tional this educational institution is. In Pakistan and India, madrasas have grown by first splitting along sectarian lines and then competing for Muslim hearts and minds. "Peripheral 'ulama," to use Zeghal's telling phrase, can also be found in Egypt. But Zeghal's choice of terms is itself indicative of the fact that the religious field in Egypt is dominated by al-Azhar to a degree unparalleled elsewhere in the Muslim world. Outside of Egypt, the task of distinguishing "peripheral" from "mainstream" 'ulama can be difficult indeed (cf. Zaman 2002, 239).

One of the reasons for al-Azhar's commanding position is that, since Egypt's 1952 revolution, a series of governments have turned to the university to assist in the construction of a public Islam compatible with Egyptian national identity (Zeghal 1996). The government's strategy reminds us that the notion that Egypt is an entirely secular state is, to borrow a phrase from Starrett, "an astounding fiction" (1998, 16). The crowning moment in the state's effort to harness Islamic education to the cart of nation-building was the nationalization of al-Azhar in 1961. With this act, Zeghal notes, religious education became "recentered" and "institutionalized under the control of the state."

This, in any case, was the intention, but as Zeghal and Starrett (1998) have both shown, the realization of this state ambition has proved difficult. Although government officials had hoped to create a uniform Islam, the program stimulated the formation of counter-hegemonic religious groupings (Starrett 1998, 14). Zeghal observes that a "parallel religious structure" of nonofficial structures for the transmission of religious knowledge has also emerged (cf. Wickham 2002). Rather than diminishing al-Azhar's authority, however, the broadening of the ideological gamut has allowed al-Azhar officials to distance themselves from the regime, at times even challenging its programs. For outsiders who dream that this space will allow al-Azhar to exercise a democratizing or civil-societal influence, the news thus far is sobering. More Azhari interventions have aimed to clamp down on deviations from neo-traditionalist dogma than have promoted civic freedoms.

In chapter 6, Dale F. Eickelman examines the curious fate of madrasa education in modern Morocco, discussed in some detail above. Morocco is an unusual case. Until the 1930s, it had a vigorous tradition of madrasa education crowned by two innovative mosque universities. Since the 1930s, however, the madrasa wing of Islamic education has declined precipitously, largely as a result of the linking of state and private schooling to status and employment opportunities. Madrasa schooling, Eickelman observes, has been relegated to the status of a "valued collective memory instead of contemporary practice."

At the same time, however, basic elements of Islamic knowledge and Muslim-mindedness have experienced no such decline in prestige. Eickel-

man reminds us that, in a Pew Global Attitudes survey, 70 percent of Moroccans "identified themselves primarily as Muslims rather than Moroccans." Increasingly, too, the peer learning once associated with madrasa study has been "taken over by religious activists." In other words, and in contrast to the situation in Egypt, the madrasa has slipped in the perceived hierarchy of schooling, but Islamic learning itself remains vitally important. In circumstances like these, one would expect freelance activists to circumvent the religious establishment and initiate programs of religious education of their own. This is just what is happening, though thus far not to a degree that would sever the cultural lines that tether Moroccan Islam to the Sultan and the state.

The position of Islamic education in modern Turkey has long been weaker than its counterpart in Egypt, and the political temperament of Turkish Islam has differed as well. As Bekim Agai discusses in chapter 7, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) launched the most radical program of secularization the Muslim world has seen. Kemal dismissed madrasas as "degenerated ruins, unable to be reformed in the light of a modern academic mentality." The pilgrimage (*hajj*) was banned from 1934 to 1947, Sufi lodges were abolished, and higher religious education ceased from 1933 to 1948. A quarter century after Kemal's secularizing reforms, state officials realized that this repression was not having the desired effect, because it was creating a system of underground religious education. This may be a useful lesson for Western policy makers to keep in mind today.

From 1948 on, the Turkish state sought to create a "depoliticized" and national Islam, programs that culminated in the "Turkish-Islamic-Synthesis" of the 1980s. Today courses on Islam are mandatory in state schools and Darwinian theories of evolution are banned. The Directorate of Religious affairs has 100,000 employees and manages 70,000 mosques. As is so often the case with étatized programs of religious education, Islamic minorities fare rather poorly here. In particular, the non-Sunni Alevi, who make up 20–30 percent of Turkey's population, find that their practices and beliefs are not acknowledged in state educational programs (Shankland 2003).

But Agai's story takes us well beyond official Islam, to one of the world's more unusual experiments in Islamic education. The Gülen movement is an Islamic educational association, founded in Turkey but now active in over fifty countries. An offshoot of Said Nursi's (1879–1960) Nurcu movement, the followers of Fethullah Gülen adhere to the same educational tenets as their forebear: don't challenge the state, implement Islam at an individual rather than state level, and emphasize science education rather than religion alone. In light of the restrictive circumstances of the Turkish Republic, the movement's tack sounds strategic. But the movement has now acquired a cultural logic more complex than tactical caution alone.

The Gülen movement is not a liberal Islam, however, at least in the Western sense of these terms. As Agai reminds us, Fethullah Gülen "is not interested in advocating a new form of theology," and, unlike many Turkish or Indonesian reformers, he doesn't challenge religious conservatives on matters of gender, headcovering, or the implementation of Islamic law. However innovative Gulen's schools, his stands on jurisprudence and doctrine are also cautiously conservative. Again, however, the practice of educational pluralism, with its emphasis on engaging intellectual traditions from outside of conventional Islam and conventional madrasa curricula, may yet contribute to a more far-reaching reformation of Muslim traditions of knowledge and learning.

Indonesia, discussed in chapter 8, lies at the other end of the Eurasian land mass. Two generations ago it was also off the map of all but the most far-seeing of specialists of Islam. But the Asian boom of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as extremist violence in the 1990s, all helped to nudge this most populous of Muslim countries back into the global spotlight. Unlike Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, or Iran, premodern Indonesia never achieved an international reputation for quality Islamic education. Certainly, from the sixteenth century on, an Indonesian variant of a residential madrasa developed in coastal and central portions of the Indonesian archipelago. But a combination of political fragmentation, imperial indifference, and European colonization all prevented its development into a more elaborate educational tradition.

The networks of Islamic scholars that operated in this region, however, were far from parochial. From the eighteenth century on, the Malayo-Indonesian or *Jawi* community (as it was known in Arabia) was a major presence in Medina and Mecca (Laffan 2003). In the late nineteenth century, Jawi visitors sometimes made up 40 percent of the holy land's pilgrims. In the early twentieth century, returned scholars and pilgrims played a central role in the movement for national independence. Muslim nationalists also showed a keen interest in educational reform, and from the 1910s on Islamic schools were established that combined general education with religious instruction. More remarkable yet is the fact that one of the country's two largest voluntary associations, the thirty-million strong Muhammadiyah (est. 1912), placed its commitment to modern education and social welfare above party-based politics. The educational innovations promoted by this organization soon spread to the traditionalist schools run by the even larger Nahdlatul Ulama (est. 1926). These and other experiences paved the way for the educational reforms of the 1970s and 1980s, which established degree equivalencies for those Islamic schools willing to implement a general educational program similar to that used in government schools.

The most remarkable feature of Islamic education in Indonesia, however, is its system of Islamic universities. There is perhaps no more striking contrast among religious universities in the Muslim world than that between this system and the Saudi universities described by Muhammad Qasim Zaman in the epilogue to this book. For reasons discussed by Arza, Afrianty, and Hefner, Indonesia's Islamic universities are among the most intellectually far-ranging in the world. In recent years, both the state-supported and privately-run wings of this system have developed programs of civic and democratic education. The universities have also facilitated the movement of tens of thousands of young Muslim women into higher education. Although events like the Bali bombings of October 2002 have underscored that a few among Indonesia's 47,000 Islamic schools have ties to radical groupings, the overall trend in religious education remains pedagogically and theologically pluralist.

As Louis Brenner shows in chapter 9, Mali presents an equally dramatic example of the rapid diffusion of a reformed Islamic education into territories as yet only marginally Islamized. As in Indonesia, in Mali the term madrasa refers to an institution that uses modern pedagogical techniques and combines general education with religious studies. The term here also applies only to primary schools, not institutions of higher learning. Mali's modern madrasas developed later than those in Indonesia, appearing only in the 1940s. Despite their relatively late appearance, by the 1980s madrasas enrolled a full 25 percent of the school-age population. The system's expansion reflected, not state policy, which was hostile to Islamic education, but the desires of parents who wanted their children to be modern and employable as well as religious. "In responding to this demand," Brenner reports, "the directors [of schools] continually enhanced the secular parts of the curriculum to conform more to that in the state schools." Rather than isolating students in an Islamist enclave, Brenner shows, Mali's madrasas prepare students for integration into the mainstream political economy.

Brenner shows that the madrasa expansion in Mali was part of a broader package of changes, which included urbanization and the establishment of Muslim voluntary associations. As in other Muslim-majority countries, the new educational system used a structured curriculum, classrooms, and graded examinations. Although esoteric knowledge and initiatic learning have not entirely disappeared, their scope has narrowed for the same reason that the madrasa curriculum has changed: knowledge and subjectivities are being reoriented to the impersonal institutions and opportunities of the marketplace and mass society.

Islamic education in contemporary Britain, as discussed by Peter Mandaville in chapter 10, knows little of the esoteric economies and spiritual hierarchies of nineteenth-century Mali. Or at least that's the way it ap-

pears to Muslim youth in Britain who seek to be religiously observant. Pious youth want little of the "village Islam" of their parents, preferring to pledge allegiance to the global *umma*. As the anguished debate among British Muslims after the London bombings of July 7, 2005 illustrated, once one reaches this conclusion, the question becomes which among the rival versions of global Islam one chooses to join.

The pluralization and competition that marks Islamic education in Britain is expressed in four varieties of Islamic schools: "faith schools," which blend an ethicalized understanding of Islam with an otherwise British national curriculum; higher educational facilities for Islamic studies, which mix instruction in the Islamic sciences with academic study of culture and history; Deobandi-style "houses of learning," which are the least influenced by mainstream British education; and informally structured halqa study circles, where recent converts and born-again believers study with an individual, and often conservative, teacher.

The "houses of learning" were the first to be organized in the UK, but it is the faith schools that have led the way in posing the question of how Islamic education should be structured. Only 3 percent of Muslim youth attend Islamic institutions of any sort, a fact which speaks legions about the Muslim desires for integration and social mobility. Yes, as recent events remind us, there are radical voices in this vibrant mix. But their numbers are small relative to the educators who wish to develop religious schooling that blends the subjects and styles of British education with religious instruction. In Britain as in other Western countries, the future of Islamic education will depend as much on the attitude and policies of the host country as it will the efforts of Muslim educators.

Conclusion

What lessons are to be learned, finally, from these varied portraits of Islamic education around the world? The first and most obvious is that modern Islamic education is neither timelessly traditional nor medieval, but an evolving institution visibly marked by the world-transforming forces of our age: religious reform, the ascent of the West, nationalism, the developmentalist state, and mass education, among others.

Of these forces, the most initially decisive were the various inter-state rivalries and programs of colonial and postcolonial state-building that swept the Muslim world from the nineteenth century on. The scale of the Western challenge became apparent only gradually, of course, and its precise form varied over time and space. In the nineteenth century, rulers in still-independent countries like Egypt, Qajar Iran, and the Ottoman Empire were convinced that schooling was the "secret wisdom" behind the

Europeans' military and technological advantage. All that was required to acquire this wisdom, the rulers believed, was a program of restricted education targeted at children of the elite. Send the princes' children to Paris, open an army academy, bring in a few Prussian advisors—measures like these would suffice to fend off the Westerners clamoring at the gate.

These "defensive military reforms" (Ringer 2001, 7) were initially conducted at a safe distance from the 'ulama and madrasas. As in Muhammad 'Ali's Egypt and the Ottoman court of Abdülhamid II, a few 'ulama might be made accessories to state educational programs. But the larger madrasa system was spared, for fear that a greater meddling might provoke unrest. Attacks by conservative 'ulama on Western-style schools in Anatolia and Iran provided regular reminders of some scholars' reservations about Western learning. Rulers in Cairo, Istanbul, and Tehran were also concerned that the new schooling might spread subversive Western ideas. The state kept new schools in quarantine, then, at a safe distance from the 'ulama and masses.

The rulers' tack, however, was not entirely strategic. It also reflected a distinctive legacy of knowledge, a legacy which has influenced the development of Muslim culture and politics to this day. Notwithstanding high-flying rhetoric to the contrary, the knowledge that guided the everyday practice of state politics was primarily based, not on the 'ulama's shari'a, but on arts of governance refined over the course of many decades of state administration, as well as through contacts with non-Muslim subjects and non-Muslim neighbors like the Byzantines (Brown 2000, 57). Guided by this level-headed legacy, sultans and their viziers had few of the 'ulama's reservations about appropriating foreign technologies of knowledge. Modern Western education was to be but one more weapon in the arsenal of governance.

As far as most 'ulama were concerned, the rulers' adoption of foreign forms of knowledge and education was acceptable as long as it did not trespass into 'ulama affairs. The separationist principle that lay behind this attitude reminds us that Muslim societies had long since developed a practical separation of knowledge and powers between rulers and 'ulama. The 'ulama were reluctant or unable to acknowledge the separation in explicit principle, since it contradicted the prophetic ideal of political and religious authority as a seamless whole (Brown 2000, 54, 56–7; Zaman 2002, 84, 87). But the separation was no less real. 'Ulama used it to defend their tradition of knowledge from abuse at the hands of rulers. Rulers took advantage of the separation to support creative initiatives in science, the arts, and state administration.

The princes' arts of governance, moreover, were not the only nonjuridical stream of knowledge flowing through the Muslim world. As Marshall Hodgson observed a generation ago, Muslim civilization had early on

developed a vibrant tradition of belletristic literature (*adab*) and empirical and speculative philosophy (*falsafa*), in addition to the 'ulama's science of law and its allied traditions of knowledge (Hodgson 1974, 1, 238–9). In the first centuries of the Muslim Middle Ages, the falsafa tradition of philosophy and historical empiricism served as the intellectual platform for a remarkable Muslim engagement with Greek philosophy and natural science. This, too, was the scaffolding upon which the great Arab historian, Ibn Khaldun, erected his magisterial "introduction" to the history of the world, the *Muqaddimah* (c. 1375), with its undogmatic commitment to historical realism.

For a variety of reasons, however, in the late Middle Ages the falsafa tradition was marginalized from the commanding heights of literate Islamic culture, including most of the Muslim world's madrasas. The marginalization took place in part because the methods and concerns of philosophy and history seemed at variance with the jurisprudence that had become the linchpin of 'ulama learning. In several Muslim countries, independent scholars continued for a while to make impressive progress in the fields of medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. Indeed, in northern India and several other countries, jurists provided private lessons in philosophy and the natural sciences in addition to instruction in the law (Sabra 1994; Huff 2003, 87). Elsewhere, however, the marginalization of falsafa and science in madrasas and Muslim scholarship was sufficient as to leave religious elites with few resources with which to critically engage Western science and natural philosophy when these reappeared on the Muslim stage in the nineteenth century. The focus of the Islamic traditions of knowledge had long since come to lie elsewhere, in a more normatively self-referential tradition.

The relative atrophy of history, natural philosophy, and empirical science in 'ulama learning, then, is another reason Muslim rulers felt obliged to look elsewhere than madrasas as they scrambled to devise a response to the Western imperial challenge. Inevitably their tactics proved insufficient because the speed and scale of the Western advance were so great. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Europeans had dismantled all or part of the Muslim state edifice in the Maghrib, India, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. Where the Europeans eviscerated Muslim rule, the 'ulama response was often to retreat from formal politics into new programs of religious education. The 'ulama's strategy was "civil societal" rather than state-centric, in the sense that it aimed to strengthen popular piety rather than struggle directly for the restoration of a Muslim state. These educational efforts built on movements for Islamic renewal that had appeared in the Muslim world in the eighteenth century (Levtzion and Voll 1987; Haykel 2003). Now, however, the renewalist project was given special urgency by the awful scale of the European advance.

The new religioeducational imperative was felt at the grassroots of Muslim society as well as at its intellectual peaks. In nineteenth-century Java (Dhofier 1999) and early twentieth-century Mali (Brenner 2001, and below), colonialism ushered in a relative social peace. The peace brought new means of production, transportation, and commerce, all of which facilitated the growth and dispersion of the native population. Muslim preachers and teachers soon joined the great population flow. Where they took up residence in a newly opened territory, the teachers typically established, not institutions of higher learning, but modest Qur'anic schools, often of a vaguely Sufi persuasion. Not infrequently these were oriented to segments of the population previously known as only nominally Islamic. The schools became a major force in the great wave of Islamization that swept the Muslim world's peripheries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As the essays in this collection make clear, however, the project of religious and educational renewal was not just a grassroots affair. In India and Java, Muslims created new networks and voluntary associations for the purposes of higher religious education, much of it of a Salafi-reformist rather than Sufi bent. As with the Muhammadiyah movement in early twentieth-century Indonesia (Alfian 1989), these associations modeled their administration on the voluntary associations Europeans had brought to Muslim lands. Some reformist educators also introduced subjects like mathematics and history into their curriculum. But not all educators embraced these innovations. Some, like India's Deobandis, warmed to European models of administration but stayed cool about nonreligious learning. After independence, and at the urging of the government, Pakistan's Deobandis opened their schools to general education. However, they still found it hard to see nonreligious instruction as anything but "a separate segment of education which students are expected to deal with as a prelude to their real vocation" (Zaman 2002, 83).

However much Muslim rulers might have hoped that the new education might remain an affair of the few, then, modern events conspired to make it a surging societal interest. In Qajar Iran, "in the period 1851–71 an increasing number of parents sent their sons abroad to Europe to study at their own expense" (Ringer 2001, 89). In Morocco in the 1930s, "Islamic institutions became the least attractive option open to . . . Muslims in colonial society," because French-run government schools "siphoned off the children of Morocco's elite" (Eickelman 1985, 163). Parental demand rather than top-down supply was the driver for this great educational transformation. Muslim parents could not be swayed from their goal of giving their children practical skills as well as a vivid sense of their faith. Although the pattern varies from country to country, most parents show a similar preference today.

At first, then, the reform of Islamic education was given momentum by the decline of Muslim political power. In colonial settings, Islamic schools were functionalized to sustain Muslim values and 'ulama social standing even in the absence of a Muslim-led state. After the Second World War, national independence seemed at first to offer Muslim educators an opportunity to relax their guard. But postcolonial nation-building only ushered in new struggles to control the commanding heights of public ethics and culture. This was no more forcefully the case than on the question of where Islam should figure in new programs of mass education.

In most Muslim countries, nationalist parties and state-making dominated the political scene through the 1960s. The nationalization of Egypt's al-Azhar in 1961, with its requirement that henceforth the university's shaykh be appointed by the president rather than the 'ulama, was symptomatic of the trend. Out of sight of the governing gaze, however, parts of the public cultural scene were quietly heading in a different direction. In all but a few countries by the 1980s, the majority of people, and the majority of women, were functionally literate (Brown 2000, 125–7; cf. Findley 1989, 141). Secondary and higher education had grown as well. State schools socialized their young charges into "the canons of . . . a secularizing, modernizing, and centralizing nationalism" that replaced the hierarchical mores of the old generation with an "ever present egalitarian populist rhetoric" (Brown 2000, 132).

Aided by a galloping urbanization, these programs succeeded in alienating educated youth from the settled parochialisms of their elders. But nation-building proved less capable of tethering the younger generation's allegiance to the ruling elite's political aims. In the 1970s and 1980s, Muslim societies were swept by resurgence of personal piety and public observance. Attendance at Friday mosque services swelled; there was a boom in the market for inexpensive booklets and magazines on Islam; women donned head coverings (*hijab*) and men sported facial hair.

Eventually these developments converged to create a powerful challenge to a heretofore hegemonic nationalism. Rulers responded with concessions to Muslim social and educational interests. But these, too, had unintended effects. In Egypt, regime efforts to co-opt al-Azhar scholars increased the 'ulama's involvement in politics (Wickham 2002; Zeghal 1996, and below). In Pakistan, the "ulama were made use of . . . without any concomitant success in the regulation of their activities" (Zaman 2002, 151). The politicization of Pakistani madrasas reached new heights during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, as a result of, among other things, a decade-long flood of armaments purchased with Saudi and American funds. It was this functionalization of Pakistani madrasas by domestic and international actors, rather than some fatal proclivity in madrasa education itself, that lay behind the rise of the Taliban in the

1990s. As these examples show, the primary question today as regards Islamic education is not whether it should be drawn up into broader political projects (functionalized), but whose projects they should be and how they should engage the plurality of people, powers, and ideas that marks our age.

A second line of reflection that emerges in the following chapters concerns the internal dynamics of Islamic education rather than its functionalization. The rise of modern Islamic education brought about a shift in the distribution and style of Islamic knowledge. The earlier pattern of informality and, in Louis Brenner's phrase, "initiatic transmission" gave way to classrooms, fixed curricula, examinations, and professional teachers. In these relatively depersonalized settings, many believers came to view their faith as "a subject which must be 'explained' and 'understood'" (Eickelman 1992, 650) on the basis of formal doctrinal canons. The transmission of Islamic knowledge had been abstracted from intimate teacher-student relationships, with their habits of dress, bearing, and deference, and repositioned in classrooms and quick-read textbooks (see Berkey, this volume; Eickelman and Piscatori 1996, 38; Starrett 1998, 9).

For state officials intent on managing religious education, the benefits of objectifying Islam seemed obvious. Religious knowledge could be packed into curricular modules and disseminated in mass educational programs. In so doing, it was hoped, the political message of that knowledge could also be stabilized and made regime-friendly. But marketing mass religious education in this way encouraged other actors to think of religion in a similarly disembedded, formulaic, and political manner. It was not long, therefore, before other, nonstate actors began to create modular Islams of their own. The result was that the religious marketplace became more pluralized and competitive. Of course there have always been different carriers of religious knowledge in the Muslim world. But the plurality and contest of meanings acquired a new intensity in the 1970s and 1980s, as debates over Islamic knowledge moved from elite circles into a restless and mobile mass society. There is no evidence to suggest that the agonistic pluralism of Muslim politics and learning is about to diminish any time soon.

These events bring us to a third and final conclusion as regards the cultures and politics of contemporary Islamic education. Some Western analysts have seen the ferment surrounding religious schooling as proof that the modern Muslim world dances to a different drummer from that of the West, East Asia, and Latin America. Muslim civilization does indeed have distinctive institutional complexes and ethicocultural concerns. But all civilizations differ in these regards; modernity is multiple, not singular (Eisenstadt 2000). What claims as to the exceptionalism of Islamic education overlook, however, is that mass education of a moral-

istic sort has been a hallmark of nation-making and societal reform since the late nineteenth century's "Age of Education" (Zeldin 1977). "A moral agenda of one sort or another lay at the heart of state educational projects unfolding in disparate parts of the late nineteenth-century globe" (Fortna 2000, 35). Charles Taylor has aptly described the "atomist prejudices" (Taylor 1989, 166) that dominate modern Western political philosophy and popular Western discourses (cf. Asad 2003; Mahmood 2005). Notwithstanding liberal philosophers' penchant for ontological individualism and secularization theorists' "master narrative of long-term religious change" (Cox 2003, 201), however, ethicoreligious issues have surged back into public debate even in Western societies, not least of all in the form of our culture wars (cf. Casanova 1994; Hunter 1991; Rosenblum 2000).

In one basic respect, of course, public-ethical ferment in the Muslim world differs from that of the historical West. Islam has no church, and modern debates over religious education and the public sphere have not had to cut their way through the question of what role a church hierarchy should play in moral education. Ever since the great recentering of 'ulama knowledge in the Muslim Middle Ages, however, Muslims have accorded a rather considerable authority to the 'ulama and their understandings of the shari'a. Official religious discourses have tended to assume that the shari'a is the fount from which public ethical instruction should flow.

Rather than smothering debate, this discursive fact has guaranteed that argument over public ethics often centers on the meaning of the shari'a and who has the right to define its terms. Just as religious nonconformists challenged the West's churches in early modern times, today new Islamic intellectuals challenge the 'ulama's monopoly over the interpretation of Islam (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996, 13, 44; Meeker 1991). Many call "for a reinterpretation of the underlying principles, or essence, of religious law" (Ringer 2001, 245), rather than an unempirical textualism. Faced with conservative 'ulama's shows of force, however, many reformists have retreated to a position similar to that of Iran's reformists at the end of the nineteenth century: their clear-eyed critiques give way to "a deliberately vague reform platform" (ibid.), as if they realize they have little chance of beating 'ulama at the public ethical game. Of course, some among the 'ulama support efforts at pluralist reform. As Zaman illustrates in the epilogue to this book, scholars like Baqir al-Sadr in Iraq and Motahhari in Iran have long called for reforms to Islamic ethics and education. But even these scholars face a dilemma similar to that of reform-minded 'ulama elsewhere. They realize that to question the authority of classical 'ulama learning is to risk being "marginalized in the structures of authority sustained by reverence for such texts" (Zaman 2002, 73).

Here then is a dilemma, arguably *the* dilemma, at the heart of Islamic education today. Is the purpose of Islamic education to teach fidelity to a fixed and finished canon? Or should religious education offer a high-minded but general religious ethics that looks outward on creation and encourages a plurality of methods for fathoming and engaging its wonder? For a Western public shocked by images of terrorist violence and convinced that madrasas may be a big part of the problem, the suggestion that the fault line in Islamic education lies astride this question of scholastic unitarianism versus epistemological pluralism may appear ludicrous. In Muslim educational practice, however, there is no more decisive a contest.

Notwithstanding two centuries of secularist forecasts to the contrary, religion and public ethics continue to matter, and matter deeply, in our modern world (Rosenblum 2000; Sandel 1996). In Muslim countries, the search for a workable public ethics has often come to focus on the meaning and functions of Islam, and the methods for their educational inculcation. Inasmuch as this is so, arguments over religious education will almost certainly remain subjects of contention in Muslim countries for years to come. We should not allow these disputes to become one more excuse for attributing a putative exceptionalism to Muslim civilization. We in the West would be truer to our own moral history were we to recognize that our schools and politics, too, bear the imprint of struggles over how children and citizens should ethicalize and behave. Current debates over Islamic education, then, do not represent Muslim civilization's regression to some premodern past. They are a civilizationally specific response to the challenges of pluralism, knowledge, and ethics faced by all citizens in the late-modern world.

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Notes

1. Although the Taliban put Islamic education back in the Western media spotlight, scholarly interest in madrasas goes back to the late nineteenth century. A later and particularly important wave of English-language scholarship appeared in the wake of the Iranian revolution, and included path breaking studies by Dale F. Eickelman (1985), Michael M. J. Fischer (1980), David Menashri (1992), and Roy Mottahedeh (2000). Nicole Grandin and Marc Gaborieau's (1997) collection, and Malika Zeghal's (1996) study of Egypt's al-Azhar, provide useful reminders of the depth of French scholarship on Islamic education as well.

2. As the chapters in this volume make clear, women are well represented in the Islamic educational systems found across the world today.

CHAPTER 2

Madrasas Medieval and Modern: Politics, Education, and the Problem of Muslim Identity

Jonathan P. Berkey

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Western public has become aware of many things of which, before that date, it was blissfully ignorant. One recent development in the Islamic world which has caught the eye of Western reporters is the increasing prominence of institutions of religious education, usually known as madrasas, particularly in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also in India, Egypt, and indeed throughout the Islamic world. Journalistic attention to this topic has been remarkable. A Lexis-Nexis search of newspaper reports for the year following September 11, 2001, reveals hundreds of separate articles devoted to the new madrasas. These institutions, we are told, have spread like wildfire in the Muslim world, particularly in South Asia. Their rise is linked, inevitably, to the political movement known loosely as "Islamism," and to the popularity of groups such as the Taliban and the emergence of new Muslim leaders such as Usama bin Ladin.

It is not clear that these madrasas represent a uniform type. The word madrasa in Arabic simply means "school," and can be applied to a wide variety of institutions. The madrasas at issue here are schools, many of them independent of government control, that in some way have an explicitly Islamic character. Not infrequently, these institutions are caricatured as "medieval." And indeed, the madrasa was one of the central institutions of religious life in much of the medieval Islamic world. Strictly speaking, there is no question of any direct institutional continuity between any of the contemporary madrasas and those which figured so prominently in medieval life. The great al-Azhar mosque in Cairo is sometimes spoken of as the oldest university in the world; unfortunately, for all its sentimental appeal, the assertion has little historical meaning. But in more general terms, to what extent can a historian of Islamic education recognize in these new schools institutions related to or descended from the medieval Islamic madrasa? What might medieval Muslim scholars, the 'ulama trained in madrasas and committed to the transmission of Islamic religious and juristic knowledge, have thought of the contemporary institutions that bear the same name?

The new madrasas, of course, do not emerge out of nowhere. Since at least the end of the eighteenth century, the field of education has been the focus of considerable attention in the Muslim world, and in particular of various reforming movements and governments. Both Muslim reformers and the contemporary historians, anthropologists, and others who have studied their efforts—and, in a slightly more hysterical fashion, some journalistic accounts of the new madrasas—have shared the conviction that education can be a critical force for change: change for the better, or change for the worse, although how the "better" and "worse" are defined, of course, shift with the individual viewpoint. Battles over politics, over Muslim identities, and over what a Muslim modernity should look like are to be fought on the field of education. Whatever one wants Muslim society to *become*, it seems, the principal instrument of coercion, influence, and change is to be the schools; education has become the leading edge in various efforts to transform Islam and the Muslim world.

The idea that education and educational institutions can be, or should be, an instrument of conscious change in the world at large—especially change of a social or political character—is an idea that strikes the historian of medieval Islamic education as a fundamentally modern one. It is an idea that, in the West, lies at the heart of the radical principles and methods associated with the American philosopher John Dewey and his colleagues at the Columbia Teachers' College, whose vision of education as a tool of social engineering represents one important element of twentieth-century modernism. It is also an idea that lies behind the sweeping attention which those concerned with the political life and future of the Middle East have lavished on education for the last two centuries. Ottoman reformers of the Nizam-i Cedid or Tanzimat periods; colonial administrators such as Macaulay in India, Lyautey in Morocco, or Cromer in Egypt; Islamic modernists such as Muhammad 'Abduh or Rashid Rida; nationalist intellectuals such as Sati' al-Husri or Michel 'Aflaq; the Islamists of our own day who may be responsible for all those madrasas in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and elsewhere: all of these figures have seen education as the cutting edge of whatever ideological sword they wielded. One of the most striking themes to emerge from a recent study of education in the late Ottoman Empire is the optimism and confidence that the Ottoman reformers placed in education as a tool with which to resist the encroachment of European colonial power, and to shape more effectively a promising future for the citizens of the empire. They unhesitatingly believed that educational reform could transform Ottoman society as a whole, and strengthen it against external enemies. Consequently they were willing to undertake a remarkably ambitious program to construct a new and at least theoretically universal network of schools, a program that involved tremendous expenditures of cash—a measure

of the Ottomans' confidence in the transformative power of education (Fortna 2002).

But the idea that education and especially educational institutions can be an instrument of change seems to mark one important disjunction between the social and intellectual construction of education in the premodern and modern periods, for at least three reasons. In the first place, the idea assumes that educational institutions have a discrete social identity and function. It may be that schools in the modern Muslim world possess that identity and function, but it is difficult to find evidence of an independent institutional role for the madrasa in premodern Islamic societies. Before the emergence of the madrasa as a distinctive educational forum in the eleventh century, the transmission of Muslim knowledge was not tied to any institutional structure. Most education probably took place in mosques, as students gathered with respected scholars in informal teaching circles to recite texts and discuss the issues which they addressed. Out of those discussions emerged the principal disciplines of the Islamic religious sciences: Qur'anic exegesis, the study of the hadith or "traditions" of the Prophet, and ultimately and especially fiqh, or jurisprudence. For the first several centuries or so—indeed, for virtually the whole of their formative phase—those sciences were transmitted outside of any institutional context. Mosques were probably the favored venue for this activity, in part because of their public nature, and in part because they were structures already associated with worship, and the transmission of knowledge *as an activity* was conceived of in terms parallel to those used to describe the central act of worship, prayer. But from an educational standpoint the mosque was simply a venue of convenience, and not an institution. There was no reason learning or teaching could not transpire anywhere else—in a home, or in the street. (The director of one of the leading contemporary madrasas in Pakistan responded to the government's efforts to bring his institution under state control with a remark that directly invoked the absence of educational institutions in the early Islamic period. "No matter," he said dismissively, suggesting that the government was bound to fail because it misunderstood the nature of the enterprise, "We can impart Islamic education under a tree" [Zia 2001].)

Beginning in the eleventh century, Muslims began to establish institutions specifically created and endowed to support the transmission of religious knowledge, and over the ensuing centuries the madrasa and its cognate institutions became one of the most common features of premodern Islamic cities. Thanks to a prodigious vein of scholarship which has emerged in the last three decades, we have now a clear sense of how this took place—how, for example, the madrasa emerged as a distinct institution, one focused on supporting the transmission of Islamic knowledge, especially fiqh, and one established not by governments or anything ap-

proaching an ecclesiastical organization but by an individual as an act of private charity (Makdisi 1981). A madrasa established in Baghdad in the late eleventh century by Nizam al-Mulk, the Persian vizier to the Saljuq sultans, is often today mentioned as the archetypal madrasa, although in fact the institution probably developed earlier in Khurasan in eastern Iran. Eventually, the madrasa became the chief institution of higher education throughout most of the medieval Islamic world, but it was not the only one, and in some places, such as Egypt and Syria, the madrasa gradually elided, both architecturally and functionally, with other religious institutions, especially the Sufi convent (*khanqah*)—a part of the process whereby Sufism entered the mainstream of Muslim religious experience (Berkey 1992, 56–60).

Over the course of the Islamic Middle Period (1000–1500), these madrasas became typical features of the urban landscapes of Near Eastern and central and southwest Asian cities, and their proliferation was one of the seminal features of medieval Islamic religious life. Even so, the institutions themselves seem to have had little or no impact on the character or the processes of the transmission of knowledge. For all that the transmission of knowledge might take place *within* an institution labeled a madrasa, and be supported by the endowments attached to that institution, the principles that guided the activities of teachers and students, and the standards by which they were judged, remained personal and informal, as they had been in earlier centuries before the appearance of the madrasa. No medieval madrasa had anything approaching a set curriculum, and no system of degrees was ever established. Indeed, medieval Muslims themselves seem to have been remarkably uninterested in *where* an individual studied. The only thing that mattered was with *whom* one had studied, a qualification certified not by an institutional degree but by a personal license (ijaza) issued by a teacher to his pupil. Whether lessons took place in a new madrasa, or in an older mosque, or for that matter in someone's living room, was a matter of supreme indifference. No institutional structure, no curriculum, no regular examinations, nothing approaching a formal hierarchy of degrees: the system of transmitting knowledge, such as it was, remained throughout the medieval period fundamentally personal and informal, and consequently, in many ways, flexible and inclusive (Berkey 1992). It is tempting to suggest that the emergence of these new educational institutions was an early harbinger of later, essentially "modern" developments: the regularization and systematization of religious life and institutions which occurred under the last and greatest of the medieval military states, the Ottoman Empire, when the 'ulama (or at least some of them), including those who taught in madrasas, became in effect employees of the state. Such an explanation has the advantage of complicating the story of the emergence of the modern

by seeking its roots at least in part in indigenous developments in the premodern Near East. For all its appeal, however, this explanation may be too teleological in character.

A second peculiarly modern aspect of the conviction that education can be an instrument of change is found in its underlying assumption about the nexus of politics and education. The development of the madrasa in the medieval period certainly had a political dimension. Each institution was founded by an individual—usually, although not exclusively, a member of the military elites that ruled over most Near Eastern societies from the eleventh and twelfth centuries down into the modern period. Those elites, such as the Mamluks who ruled Egypt and Syria from the thirteenth through the early sixteenth centuries, were often foreign-born, culturally alien, speaking a different language from the local population, sometimes only superficially Islamicized. Building and endowing a madrasa, which typically took the founder's name and in which he was often buried, paid political dividends by raising the profile and establishing the Muslim bona fides of the individual Mamluks. The pattern of establishing madrasas and cognate institutions served a broader political interest as well, since the military elites had frequently come to power in somewhat irregular fashion. The collective exertions and expenditures of the Mamluks and others formed one cornerstone of a quid pro quo which characterized political arrangements in much of the medieval Islamic world, in which the ruling military elites provided the institutions and the endowments to support them, and in exchange appropriated at least a part of the esteem in which the public held the activities of the scholars who lived and worked in them (Berkey 1992).

But the ruling elites left the institutions themselves largely untouched, and left the 'ulama a generally free hand to supervise and regulate the transmission of knowledge itself. Occasionally control over appointments of professors or others to a madrasa might emerge as a field of contest in which the ruling elites took an interest, but their concern did not extend to any systematic effort to guide educational life or shape its purposes. Several decades ago, historians thought they perceived a closer relation of educational program and political purpose. They characterized the appearance of madrasas as a fundamental feature of what was called the "Sunni Renaissance." The madrasas, it was thought, provided new and newly militant Sunni governments of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries with a cadre of functionaries, bureaucrats, and apologists to assist their struggle against the various Shi'i regimes which in the tenth century suddenly burst on the scene (for example, Hodgson 1974, 2:47). This explanation is probably no longer tenable, at least in such a stark form. Several historians have cast doubt on any sort of systematic, functional link between the madrasas and the political and bureaucratic ad-

ministration of the medieval Sunni governments. In eleventh- and twelfth-century Iraq, for example, aside from a few *qadis* (judges) who served the Saljuq sultans as viziers, relatively few religious scholars entered the state bureaucracy (Ephrat 2000). In Mamluk Cairo, too, despite some 'ulama who served the Mamluks in an administrative capacity, the career paths of scholars and bureaucrats remained fairly distinct (Petry 1981). The establishment of madrasas served the political interests of those who founded them, both individually and collectively, but the institutions themselves, and the academic activities they supported, were not subjected to systematic governmental regulation and control, and did not undergird any particular political program.

A final difference about discussions, both scholarly and political, of education in the modern, as opposed to the medieval, Islamic world concerns the element of change itself. Medieval Islamic civilization attributed considerable power to education. Medieval Muslims placed enormous confidence in 'ilm, or knowledge—specifically, knowledge of the Qur'an, the records of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad, and the religious sciences derived from them. Any number of aphorisms which survive in the literary record attest to this confidence: for example, that "one scholar is more powerful against the devil than a thousand worshippers" (al-Zarnuji 1947, 22; Rosenthal 1970, 247–8)—a rather astonishing statement, if one considers the central position of prayer, or worship, in defining the life of a Muslim. This power had social and even political consequences: Mamluks and others may have established madrasas out of genuine piety, but there is no doubt that their doing so helped to confer legitimacy on military regimes which operated in varying degrees of cultural tension with the indigenous Muslim populations over whom they ruled. The power that the 'ulama wielded by virtue of their control of the transmission of knowledge was rooted, of course, in a spiritual perception, but that does not mean that, for medieval Muslims, it was any less real. Hence those sultans and others who established institutions of learning frequently made certain that they would be buried in a tomb attached to the building, so as to benefit after death from the spiritual power of the religious activities which took place therein.

But for all the *power* that medieval Muslims attributed to education, *change* was not something that the transmission of knowledge was ordinarily expected to foster. The guiding principles of medieval Islamic education were fundamentally conservative, in the literal sense of that term. "A good teacher hands on what he has been taught," went a popular aphorism, "neither more nor less" (Tritton 1957, 50). Much about the prevailing patterns of premodern Islamic education reinforced a conception of education which cast it, like the Hindu god Vishnu, in the role of *preserver*. Probably all education is in some way inherently hierarchical.

But hierarchical relationships were central to medieval Islamic education—from the regimented patterns in which teachers and students sat, with authority literally moving outward from the teacher through his older and senior students to younger and less experienced ones on the periphery, to the frankly paternalistic terms in which treatises on education discussed the teacher-student relationship (Chamberlain 1994, 108–9). Hierarchies may change, sometimes in spite of themselves, but they are almost by definition conservative in outlook.

The conservative character of the transmission of religious knowledge is further illustrated by the importance of *memorization*. Here we must be careful, for the cultural significance of memorization can easily be misunderstood. Memorization served a conservative cause, although not in the way that is usually supposed. Western news reporters who in the wake of the September 2001 terrorist attacks visited and reported on the new madrasas in Pakistan and Afghanistan professed themselves shocked to discover how education in these schools relied on memorization, to which they invariably attached the pejorative adjective "rote." But this unfairly casts memorization in an almost demonic role, and reflects nothing so much as the failure of human memory in the modern era. In medieval Islamic education, memorization was a tool, not an end in itself; education did not end with committing a text to memory. But the *process* of memorization, which typically involved the close and direct supervision of a student's shaykh, did reinforce the hierarchical character of instructional relationships, and so contributed to defending and preserving the transmission of knowledge as an authoritative system. If the question had been posed to them, medieval Muslims would have been far more likely to have conceived of education as a pillar of *stability*, rather than as a force for *change*.

Let me be clear about what this does, and especially what it does not mean. There is no attempt here to suggest that classical or medieval Islamic culture was in any way stagnant—that is, to resuscitate old and discredited "Orientalist" stereotypes about a timeless and unchanging Islam. On the contrary, premodern Islamic culture was preternaturally vibrant and creative—far more so, in fact, than most of those who participated most actively in shaping its contours would admit (Berkey 1995). Its creative and flexible character stemmed in part from some of its basic organizing principles, and also from the methods and standards through which it realized the transmission of knowledge. The 'ulama were very much an open elite. The criteria for determining who constituted an *'alim*, a learned person, were so loose and flexible that a "closed shop"—such as the medieval European clergy, set apart through ordination and consecration and holding a virtual monopoly on education, or the modern academy, with its narrow openings for admission and recognition (in our

own case, an advanced degree from a prestigious university)—was virtually impossible to construct and defend. The 'ulama in the premodern period, in other words, represented an extraordinarily heterogeneous group, one that included famous scholars well versed in jurisprudence and other religious sciences, but also lesser scholars, preachers, and other minor religious figures, Sufis of varying stripes, as well as others with few if any professional aspirations of an academic nature who nonetheless managed to participate, in some limited but meaningful way, in the transmission of religious knowledge (Berkey 2001). The informal and personal character of medieval Islamic education, in other words, allowed many to participate in the transmission of knowledge who would not ordinarily be reckoned among the educated elite.

Another factor was that the very concept of what constituted 'ilm—that is, knowledge of social and religious significance—was itself porous and polymorphous. Partly this arose through the absence of any formally constituted authoritative body: the absence, if you will, of a church. What served in its place was the consensus of the scholarly community, and most studies have suggested that, in practice, that consensus was quite broad—that it left the parameters of what constituted legitimate knowledge fairly loose. But it also arose from some of the basic pedagogical methods of premodern Islamic education. So, for example, a class in jurisprudence might be guided by some particular treatise that was memorized by students and formed the object of discussion, but that discussion was never enslaved to the text. As a matter of instruction, texts were routinely read aloud, both in person and by some person, then broken down and commented upon. As Michael Chamberlain has elegantly expressed it, texts were not frozen in any form, even that which their authors had given them. They "were rather enacted fortuitously in time," and so could be invoked, and recast, to suit the competing needs of moments and of individuals (Chamberlain 1994, 143). To put the matter another way, intellectual discourse was as much about disagreement and "polyvocality" as anything else (Messick 1993, 34).

For all of the inherent creative power in medieval Islamic culture, however, the idea that education and the transmission of knowledge could be an instrument of *change* is nonetheless discordant. What makes it so is the dominant grain of medieval Islamic discourse. The language of that discourse—in effect, its "ideology," although, of course, medieval Muslims would not have used that term—was explicitly conservative, again, in the literal sense of that term. In the words of a well-known dictum, "every new thing is an innovation, and every innovation is an error, and every error leads to hell"—a dictum which, like many other ideological expressions, was cast in the form of a saying of Muhammad (Ibn al-Hajj 1929, 1:79; Berkey 1995, 42). The opposition to innovations was, of

course, an old one in the Islamic tradition, and also a highly nuanced one. In juristic discourse, for example, a distinction was often made between innovations that were acceptable, and even praiseworthy, and those which were not. But as an *ideological* language, the hostility to innovation became a dominant theme in the medieval Islamic Near East, as much a part of religious life as the madrasas with whose development it was contemporaneous. It was paralleled by a growing emphasis in legal discourse and practice on *taqlid* (imitation)—that is, following established authorities (Fadel 1996). The fourteenth-century Syrian jurist Ibn Taymiyya was one familiar exponent of the ideology of opposition to innovation. Ibn Taymiyya was a member of the Hanbali *madhhab*, or school of law, as are his intellectual descendants in the modern world, the Wahhabis. As a result, this ideological posture is often associated especially with Hanbali scholars. In fact, however, in the Middle Ages it was embraced by scholars belonging to all four of the so-called orthodox schools of law.

The nature of human society being what it is, that principle did not in reality exclude the possibility of change. Even the parameters of *sunna*, the normative practice associated with Muhammad and his companions, were subject to quiet, sometimes unacknowledged growth and evolution, despite its theoretically timeless quality. But the ideological framework of medieval Islamic discourse by and large devalued the possibility of innovation, and so those who were most committed to that discourse, those who participated in the transmission of knowledge—who were, of course, "more powerful against the devil than a thousand worshippers"—*perceived* education as a force for stability, rather than change. The staying power of this ideology was considerable. The earliest waves of reforms in the Ottoman Empire were famously cast by their proponents in the language of "return"—a return, that is, to an uncorrupted, pristine Islamic order, regardless of how innovative they were in substance. When 'Abbas Mirza, the Qajar prince, instituted a series of relatively minor educational reforms in Iran in the early nineteenth century, reforms inspired by both European models and European power, he was forced to rebut charges that they constituted unlawful innovations, and defended them by insisting that, in fact, they would *restore* the status quo ante, the supremacy which Muslims had known in the days of the Prophet (Ringer 2001, 41–2).

So medieval Muslims recognized the *power* of education, and as historians we can perceive beneath the surface of ideological discourse considerable flux and evolution, in the content and character of that knowledge, the transmission of which was education's object. At the same time, that evolution was to some degree obscured by the ideological language in which medieval Muslims discussed the forms and purposes of education. In the modern world, by contrast, do we not in some ways face the opposite situation? Is it possible that, at the very moment that the power of

education to provoke change has been recognized, embraced, and celebrated, the scope for evolution and growth, at least evolution and growth of the sort cultivated by medieval patterns of Islamic education, has in some ways been narrowed?

Consider, for example, the thousands of Islamic schools in South Asia that have emerged from the institutional network which owes its origins to the school founded at Deoband in northern India in the nineteenth century (Metcalf 1982). Many of the new madrasas established in Pakistan and Afghanistan, including those in which Mullah Omar and other Taliban leaders were trained, are, directly or indirectly, products of the Deobandi mission. The founders of the Deobandi model explicitly and deliberately jettisoned much of the informal pattern of traditional Muslim education. The school at Deoband was to have a fixed institutional character. Its academic and administrative staff were to be permanent and salaried. The curriculum was to be regularized—drawing on earlier Indian efforts to revitalize Muslim education by identifying a standard canon of texts as the basis for instruction, efforts that go back to at least the eighteenth century, the Deobandi 'ulama eschewed textual innovation in favor of "classical Islamic texts," and in the process may be said to have *established* an Islamic curriculum for the first time (Zaman 2002, 68–9). A student's progress was to be measured, not by a web of personal relationships established over a lifetime, but by a series of carefully calibrated examinations. All of this apparently reflected the transforming, perhaps distorting power of the colonial context and the influence of modern British educational models. It also, however, undermined the informal and highly personalized system of transmitting religious knowledge which had encouraged flexibility and creativity in medieval Islamic educational and intellectual life. Intellectually, the Deobandi model was what Clifford Geertz might call "scripturalist" in orientation (1969). That is, it focuses on the Qur'an and hadith, promoting the idea that through them rather than through the extensive medieval apparatus of commentary one could discern the precise parameters of the community of Muhammad and thus a normative model for what "Islam" should be. Simultaneously it downplays the significance of the polyvocal tradition that really constituted medieval Islamic religious discourse.

The Deobandi enterprise has, in some ways, reprised parts of the medieval Islamic ideological agenda. In their numerous *fatwas*, which they issued both to guide the Muslim faithful and also to establish their own authority within the Indian Muslim community, the Deobandi scholars took aim at what they considered accretions to proper ritual and practice. Various popular religious practices, such as celebrations of the Prophet's birthday, they dismissed as unlawful innovations. The popular customs which gave a local flavor to Islam as practiced in particular communities

were to be rejected in favor of an idealized historical construction, one associated with Muhammad and the pristine Muslim community. That project established a direct link between the Deobandi movement and Muslim reformers of the medieval period, especially those who embraced most fervently the ideology of opposition to innovations.

As it turns out, the flexibility and polyvocality of the Islamic tradition die hard. Even the Deobandi movement has been subject to its gravitational pull, and has given rise to numerous and widely divergent positions on matters both religious and political. Not all Deobandis, in other words, are Taliban (Metcalf 2002). But Deobandis, and others like them, have embraced a "scripturalist" agenda in a very different world than that inhabited by, say, Ibn Taymiyya. Ibn Taymiyya fulminated against the visitation of tombs and the veneration of saints, popular customs in his day which he considered unlawful innovations—but his was not a majority view, and in any case his own tomb became an object of visitation and veneration after his death. That twist is more than just ironic; it reminds us again of the flexibility and creativity of the medieval Islamic tradition, *despite* its rhetorical or ideological commitment to a fixed, conservative world view. But modern scripturalists operate in a very different world, one that may be more amenable to their project—the project, that is, of replacing the polyvocality which characterized the premodern transmission of knowledge with a "univocal" understanding of Islam.

For one thing, of course, they operate in an era of *printing*, a technological innovation which can, of course, assist the spread of literacy, but which can also contribute to the fixing of a tradition in one particular form. Brinkley Messick, in his magisterial study of education and the law in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Yemen, has traced the way in which print culture, along with a more rationalized and institutionalized system of education, has in some ways undermined the organic flexibility of traditional Islam in Yemen, what Messick called the "internal discursive construction" which was of the essence of the preprint transmission of Islamic knowledge (Messick 1993, 34). The new institutional forms developed by Deobandi reformers and others have also served to strengthen the hands of the scripturalists and those committed to one particular, idealized historical model for what constitutes "Islam," at least under certain conditions. These new institutional forms may be inescapable: the conditions of modern life may simply give the upper hand to those who embrace an educational model built on a regularized curriculum and institutional structure. The strength of the Deobandi movement may stem from their recognition of that reality. It may also stem from the reality of cultural tension and conflict in the colonial and postcolonial worlds: Deobandis in South Asia, Wahhabis in Arabia, and other Muslim reformers embracing and campaigning for a pristine or "purified" Islam can rest not only

on their religious bona fides, but on a reputation for resisting the advance of Islam's external enemies. But the bottom line is that the conditions in which medieval Muslims pursued the transmission of knowledge are simply no longer there.

The changes associated with printing and new institutional arrangements are part of larger developments. Most broadly, in many parts of the world, Islam is undergoing what the anthropologists Dale Eickelman and Gregory Starrett have termed a process of "objectification": that is, the identification of a precise (and, at least from an anthropological perspective, arbitrary) set of beliefs, values, and practices which are assumed to constitute a normative and timeless "Islam." In this, of course, Islam is hardly alone. But as these anthropologists have argued, this represents a sharp break from the premodern Islamic past, with its emphasis upon a living tradition mediated by an oral and personal system of transmitting knowledge, and defined by a principle of consensus, *ijma*', which was in fact quite broad (Eickelman, 1985; Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996, 37–45; Starrett 1998).

One aspect of this process of objectification may be the stress laid by reformers in many parts of the Muslim world—in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, in Egypt, Sudan and North Africa—on "Islamic law." The imposition of Islamic law is perhaps the most universal political objective of "Islamists," wherever they operate. Most of us assume that this is quite natural—that it stems from what Western students of Islam have almost habitually referred to as Islam's emphasis upon law, upon practice and behavior as opposed to doctrine or belief—Islam, as the textbooks put it, not as a "religion" in the Western sense of the term, but as an "all-embracing way of life." But those who argue that Islam is being changed by this process of objectification might say that the very idea that one can identify a precise body of legal principles and doctrine as a conceptually distinct something called "Islamic law" is an idea foreign to the premodern Islamic tradition. The premodern shari'a, in Brinkley Messick's phrase, is decidedly not "law" but rather what he called a "general societal discourse," with an emphasis upon the word *discourse* and all the flexibility that term implies. One can see this process of objectification at work already in nineteenth-century attempts to "reform" and to codify Islamic law. It is perhaps most striking in the emergence in British India of that bewildering construct, "Anglo-Muhammadan law." Driven by both the British legal system's consuming quest for binding legal precedent, and by the regularizing and rationalizing utilitarianism and modernism of the colonial administration, those who constructed "Anglo-Muhammadan law" sought to rescue order and regularity from the jaws of indeterminacy—as Lord Cromer put it in a different context, to bid "disorder and administrative chaos cease" (Cromer 1916, 556). Of greater interest than

Anglo-Muhammadan law itself—which, after all, could be administered by officials who were not necessarily themselves Muslim—is the reaction to it on the part of Indian ʻulama. Aware of the British criticism that Islamic law as traditionally formulated was indeterminate and unpredictable, many Indian ʻulama responded by stressing even more the force of *taqlid* and by developing what Muhammad Qasim Zaman has called a "rhetoric of invariable law" (Zaman 2002, 24). Similarly, the Ottoman reformers who set out to codify the shariʻa in the mid-nineteenth century referred to the shariʻa as "an ocean without shore." This was a striking choice of words on their part. Medieval mystics had used the phrase to suggest the limitless range of meaning and interpretation which could be found in the expressed word of God. By contrast, the Ottoman reformers employed it to suggest that the shariʻa as traditionally formulated, with its lack of fixed reference points, was virtually unnavigable, and therefore unsuitable to the needs of a modern state and its citizens. There has been much chatter in the Western media over the unusually "harsh" brand of Islamic law imposed by the Taliban in Afghanistan. No doubt it was harsh, but was it perhaps also simply one manifestation of this broader phenomenon of objectification, one particularly successful example of the effort to replace the polyvocal tradition of premodern Islam with a univocal construct?

Another factor which marks a sharp break between the premodern and modern scenes, and which contributes to objectification—to strengthening the homogenizing and scripturalist agenda of those associated with many of the new madrasas—is the presence of Western culture and colonial and postcolonial power. In the nineteenth century, this power was often felt through the medium of missionary schools—most of them Christian, but some Jewish as well—founded by Europeans, and (as in India) through competition with and pressure from educational institutions founded by colonial governments. Several recent monographs on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century educational reform efforts in the Ottoman Empire, in Iran, and elsewhere, have stressed the degree to which educational reform was both driven by and *shaped* by competition from those missionary enterprises, in a complicated pas de deux intertwining both admiration for and hostility to Western culture and modes of education (Ringer 2001).

More recent developments may suggest that that tortuous dance is not yet completed. In the wake of September 11, the United States has applied considerable pressure on the Musharraf government in Pakistan to clamp down on the new madrasas there. Since closing them would not be politically feasible, the struggle has largely come down to one over their curricula. In the first place, of course, that a madrasa could even *have* a curriculum is in itself a sign of the force behind the modern Western model—and at the same time a reminder of the continuity between these schools

and that in Deoband. In the second place, this battle is hardly new. Already in British India, debate over madrasa education and its reform often centered around the question of what is "useful"—although there was little agreement as to what exactly constituted the "useful." (Should a madrasa education prepare a student for active participation in modern economic and social life? Would it be more "useful" to protect Islam through a reform of madrasa education that stressed purely "religious" subjects?) In the 1960s and 1970s, there was much discussion among Pakistani 'ulama, and especially on government-appointed commissions, about the character of education in the madrasas. Those discussions betray a fundamental tension which reflects the radically different circumstances facing the modern, as opposed to the medieval, 'ulama. On the one hand, there was an effort to preserve and protect the "religious" character of madrasa education, which a 1962 Pakistani commission suggested could be accomplished by reducing or eliminating such "nonreligious" subjects as logic and philosophy—never mind the fact that these disciplines formed an important component in the education of many medieval 'ulama. On the other hand, successive Pakistani governments have sought to "modernize" the education in the madrasas by supplementing the religious curriculum with other subjects—languages and sciences, for example—following the same syllabus as those used in state schools (Zaman 1999; 2002).

To a medievalist, what is especially striking about these debates and developments is the way in which they restrict the "religious sphere" to a limited range of intellectual disciplines—even if there is some confusion as to where the limits actually lie. This reflects, of course, the power of the familiar post-Enlightenment Western construct of modernity. From the standpoint of the 'ulama, this development is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the identification of certain areas of intellectual discourse as "religious" can serve to circumscribe the sphere of the religious elite's authority and thus marginalize them—certainly that has, more or less, been its result in our own society (at least until recently, with the rise of the so-called religious right). On the other hand, in tying the 'ulama specifically to those disciplines which even secularists acknowledge as authentically Islamic, the dynamics of modernization have tended to affirm their role as custodians of the Muslim tradition. As Malika Zeghal has shown for the network of institutions focused on al-Azhar and the Egyptian 'ulama, this is a development with potentially significant and, from the 'ulama's point of view, very positive political ramifications (Zeghal 1999; cf. Zaman 2002).

Educational reform is likely to remain a principal battleground for the political future and the Muslim identity of Pakistan, or indeed other Islamic nations. One point of struggle, of course, will be the curricula of

all the new madrasas in South Asia and elsewhere. It appears that there already is in fact a fair degree of diversity in their curricula. The Pakistani government, or perhaps one should say the American government, has sought to "temper" the product of the new madrasas by encouraging them to broaden their curricula to include subjects such as math, computers, and English. Less hysterical news accounts suggest that many such institutions already incorporate those things into what they teach. What is actually being taught in these schools is a matter of prime interest. But to a historian, what is most significant is that, in part at American prompting, the battle is being cast in all-too-familiar terms, in the dichotomous language of religion *vs* secularism, of tradition against modernity—of the Qur'an, hadith and Arabic on one side, and math, computers and English on the other.

This may help to put one of the more troubling features of the new madrasas into a broader historical perspective. Amongst all the Western news accounts concerning the new madrasas in Pakistan, one word that appeared almost in tandem with madrasa was jihad. A journalist writing in the *New York Times Magazine* described the Haqqaniyya, one of the leading religious schools in Pakistan (and the alma mater of many Taliban leaders), as a "jihad factory"—a phrase which has stuck, and has replicated itself throughout the Western media (Goldberg 2000). Their purpose, such accounts suggest, is to guarantee an endless supply of anti-Western mujahidin. On the face of it, that would mean that these new madrasas are indeed radically different than the medieval institutions which bore the same name.

At first glance, this might seem to be another product of the Western imagination, of our seemingly endless and macabre fascination with the specter of Muslim jihad. It is extremely dispiriting for a historian of medieval Islamic education to read a contemporary newspaper article of which the first line is the following: "To mention the words Muslim and *madrasah* today is to watch a chill run down the spine of many people" (*Jakarta Post* 2001). (Never mind the hopelessly mixed metaphors of that sentence!)

But further deliberation may suggest that such accounts unintentionally reflect *something* of the truth, at least in an attenuated fashion. It is not simply that these institutions did apparently provide recruits for the Taliban in their struggle against the Americans, or that one can quote educators at these madrasas who say: "We do not just impart Islamic education, but prepare students for jihad" (Zia 2001). Rather, it is (again) that the very conditions under which Islamic knowledge is transmitted have changed. For more than a century, education in the Near East and the Islamic world has in effect been a battleground, in which Near Eastern educational reformers have self-consciously and perhaps necessarily de-

scribed their efforts in the language of competition and struggle against European governments and culture. That would suggest that describing the agenda of these new madrasas in Pakistan and elsewhere as an effort to implement jihad is not simply a response to the political chaos of Central and South Asia in the past two or three decades, or the reflection of some new, and newly violent form of radical Islam. Rather it reflects the language in which Islamic education has been debated, and the conditions under which Muslims have had to develop their educational reforms, in a world in which the compelling force of Western culture and the projection of Western political and military power cannot be ignored. The new madrasas are indeed less the preservers of a living but established culture (as were their medieval predecessors), and more a locus of jihad, of the "struggle" to work out an acceptable and indigenous form of Muslim modernity.

A final changed factor in the nexus of educational reform in the modern world concerns the presence of the modern state. This raises the fundamental question of the relation between religion and politics in an Islamic society, a question for which definitive answers have eluded both medieval and modern Islamic societies. On the one hand, it would seem that, at least on the surface, as the power of the state has increased over the last two centuries, the status and authority of the 'ulama has declined. That, at least, is the basic plot line with which the story of educational reform has often been told: the establishment of new networks of state-supported schools, conceived of as a fundamental component of the twin projects of modernization and nation building, has eliminated the 'ulama's earlier monopoly on education and so diminished their authority. In the mid-1960s, in the full flush of the confidence in which postwar modernization theory basked, historians and social scientists routinely cast the authority of the 'ulama as having been "irreparably undermined" by changes in the modern Near East, especially changes in its educational system (see for example Sharabi 1966; Crecelius 1972). In this model, the sudden appearance, or re-appearance, of the new madrasas represents a resurgence of traditional Islamic patterns, at the moment that the authority of the new nation-states has been undermined by their economic and political failures. Hence, for example, the Pakistani critic of the madrasas, who observed (inaccurately, I think) that "these schools are providing an education which is basically unchanged from the eleventh century" (Kelley 2001). In accounts such as this, the term "medieval" becomes literally a term of abuse. And so a major Indian publication announced in a headline shortly after 9/11: "Madrasas Should Go Back to the Middle Ages"! (*Statesman* 2001).

But the situation is much less clear than this basic storyline would suggest. Of course, the parameters of the relationship between the 'ulama and the state in the modern world are so diverse as to defy generalization—the

experiences of Turkey, say, and its neighbor Iran, could hardly be more different. But it appears that the rise of modern nation states, with strong centralized governments, even when those governments are dominated by a secularizing elite, has in the long run turned out to present the ʻulama with as many opportunities as challenges. In part, this stems from the widespread failure of the secularist ideologies that dominated politics in much of the Muslim world in the 1950s and 1960s. But it also arises from a surprisingly complex relationship between the religious elites and the process of "modernization" (if I may temporarily invoke a loaded term) and state formation in the Muslim world—a complexity that sets the Muslim experience off from that in our own societies. The end result is that in some places—Egypt, for example—the ʻulama have increasingly found themselves in a position to shape political discourse and avail themselves of at least part of the coercive power of the modern state (Zeghal 1999). (It may be significant that Deobandi madrasas in India, a religiously diverse and pluralist society, have given rise to accommodationist and apolitical groups, whereas those in states which have explicitly identified themselves as Islamic, such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, have tended to produce those who, like the Taliban, have embraced a radical fusion of religion and politics. [Metcalf 2002])

One of the most prominent themes of recent research on modern educational reform in the Near East has been that of the role of religion, and of the ʻulama, in shaping the course of these reforms. Some religious scholars have certainly resisted, but others have participated actively in establishing new state-supported school systems and their curricula. The observation that religion has in fact played a vital role in modern, state-sponsored educational reform accords well with the project, familiar to most specialists in the field if not yet to a wider lay public, of deconstructing the liberal "modernization" model, with its neat dichotomy pitting the religious against the secular, the traditional against the modern. So, for example, Gregory Starrett has called the received notion that the Egyptian government of Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak is a secular one "an astounding fiction." Nowhere, he argues, has the connection between religion and state in contemporary Egypt been clearer than in the public schools. This alters completely the historical framework in which the so-called Islamic resurgence, including the new religious schools, should be understood. Islamism then is not so much a response to secularism as it is the product of the religious discourse used by the modern state to justify itself. So, Starrett concludes, "the culturally mediated choice between tradition and modernity rest[s] on false premises." Put another way, the new madrasas and everything they represent are not so much a reaction against modernity as they are a distinctively Muslim approach to it (Starrett 1998).

Further complicating the situation is some uncertainty as to who the new ʻulama actually are. As I have stressed, the ʻulama in the premodern period were very much an open elite. To be sure, they developed carefully constructed principles and procedures for determining the nature of an individual scholar's authority, as a means of attempting to control the transmission of knowledge and limiting the circle of those privileged to do so. But those principles and procedures were highly personal and flexible, and were entirely independent of state authority. Sultans and amirs might support the ʻulama and their activities by, say, providing funds for the construction and endowment of madrasas. But the distribution and recognition of status among the ʻulama was largely a matter of their own concern and regulation. That system was thrown into some confusion by the rise of modern, centralized states. Already in the Ottoman Empire one can see a regularization of the ʻulama, their inscription into precisely defined ranks and their induction as employees of the state, a process which has of course continued down to the present day. The rise of new schools and new religious elites independent from, even in opposition to those supported by the state, could be seen as a throwback to earlier conditions.

But again the situation is not so simple. In the first place the new religious class is still tied in some ways to the modern state. The madrasas of Pakistan, for example, derive a portion of their funding directly from the national government, from a tax the Pakistani government calls *zakat* (Malik 1997, 174)—something that, as far as I know, was unheard of in the medieval period. Secondly, the creation of new religious elites has been driven largely through modern technologies and in the so-called modern sector: through printing, cassettes, television, and now, of course, the Internet. This expands the pool of people who can participate in and shape the new religious dialogue, and renders irrelevant and unworkable the traditional mechanisms for regulating access to ʻulama status and to defining the parameters of the knowledge which is to be transmitted. Commitment to the faith, and a recognized status as a carrier of its "knowledge" and traditions, may now be established by individuals very different in background and training than their medieval predecessors. Hence, of course, the well known tensions that frequently arise, in Egypt, in the subcontinent, and elsewhere, between more traditional ʻulama and the new Islamist intellectuals. The religious elites are thus a very diverse, even fragmented group. They range from ʻulama cast in a medieval mode, asserting their authority through written commentaries on classical texts and replicating themselves through ijazas and other traditional instruments of control, to figures such as Usama bin Ladin's house intellectual Ayman al-Zawahiri, trained in one of the modern professions, who stake a claim to religious authority in what an Azhari shaykh could only con-

sider a rather unorthodox manner. In the middle is a vast array of preachers and other minor religious functionaries, trained in the institutions dominated by the traditional 'ulama, but who may also have a sociological or ideological affinity to the new Islamist intellectuals—a group of religious figures who are only now beginning to receive significant scholarly attention (for example, Zeghal 1999). Finally, of course, the new religious elites tied to the new institutions of education see themselves as playing a very different role in contemporary society than did their medieval precursors. The hysteria in the Western press over the jihad preached in the new madrasas may be a product of an over-active Western imagination—we may look with suspicion upon the simplistic dichotomy which sees the denizens of the new madrasas as "traditionalists" and hostile to what is blithely called the modern—but there is little doubt that many of those who study and teach in them very often have a distinct and radical political agenda.

Even if there are no direct historical ties between the madrasas of the Middle Ages and those which have become so popular in recent years, the issues of religious authority faced by the medieval 'ulama and their intellectual heirs in the modern world are strikingly similar. From the very beginning, Muslims have had to reconcile the tension between a tradition that is fundamentally diverse and polyvocal, in which religious authority is fluid and fragmented, and ideological and other pressures which have encouraged a more univocal, homogeneous, or "objectified" construction of Islam. In other words, it is possible to see developments such as the new madrasas as organically connected to the medieval heritage of the Islamic Near East, and not simply as a manifestation of some new and radicalized Islam. At the same time, the historical conditions faced by contemporary Muslims, whether traditional 'ulama or the newer Islamist intellectuals, are quite different than those faced by their medieval predecessors. How they work to resolve the irresolvable question of the relation of religious and political authority, whether in madrasas or in other religious forums, will shape the character of Islam for decades to come.

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CHAPTER 3

Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas of South Asia

Muhammad Qasim Zaman

THE SORT OF EDUCATION that madrasas of South Asia do or ought to provide has been much debated between and among the religious scholars associated with them, government officials, and other observers since at least the late nineteenth century (Zaman 2002, 60–86; 2005, 73–82). These debates have intensified in recent years, especially in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, but many of their themes are not new. Critics have argued with some consistency that the texts that comprise the curriculum of the madrasas were written many centuries ago, and the issues they address and the manner in which they present them belong to a very different age. Medieval disputes in Islamic philosophy and theology leave little room for attending seriously to modern philosophical problems, for instance; and works of substantive law (fiqh) take no account of modern legal problems. Even the Arabic language, the crucial gateway to the foundational texts and the religious sciences, is sometimes taught through centuries-old works of lexicography and grammar. The narrow, outmoded training madrasas offer prepare their students for little more than functioning as mosque preachers and prayer leaders. As General Pervez Musharraf, the President of Pakistan (1999–), put it in expressing this view, "I ask these seminaries how many mosques . . . there [are] in the country to accommodate all these one million students as imams" (*The News* 2005).

Other discussions, often—but not only—by journalists, show considerably less acquaintance with the culture of the madrasa. Their concern is to suggest how madrasas produce or house those associated with radical and militant religiopolitical causes or to suggest links between such causes and the education imparted in the madrasa (cf. Goldberg 2000; Kaplan 2000, 76–8; Rashid 2000, 22–4, 26–7, 29, 31–3, 88–93; Lévy 2003, 289–305). Such views—like critiques of madrasa learning—are, of course, not without substance. During the guerilla war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979–91), considerable numbers of young Afghan refugees were, in fact, housed in madrasas in the North-West Frontier and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan and more than a few madrasas were openly engaged in supporting various aspects of the Afghan struggle (cf.

Malik 1996, 206–7; Rashid 2000). It was from the madrasas of Pakistan that the movement of the Taliban emerged; and during their five-year rule of Afghanistan (1996–2001), the Taliban maintained close ties with leading Pakistani madrasas. Many of these madrasas have also had some association with radical Sunni and Shi'i sectarian organizations in Pakistan. Yet while the connection between particular forms of religiopolitical radicalism and the madrasas of Pakistan is scarcely unfounded, the observers who most commonly posit it often take a less than sophisticated view of how to account for it.

Nor does the literature on the contemporary madrasas offer much insight into the complex contexts, political as well as religious, in which these institutions have operated and evolved. How have the madrasa-educated religious scholars, the 'ulama, responded to the sometimes significant changes around them, both in the larger communities they inhabit as well as within their institutions? How have the 'ulama themselves argued about the need for rethinking facets of their culture? In what directions have their activities and discourses evolved? Any understanding of their activities obviously requires careful attention to how the state and other political actors have shaped them. But it also necessitates attending to the contours of the religious tradition that informs the 'ulama's definitions of their identity and authority. How does this tradition fashion their discourses and their religiopolitical activities, or is shaped by them? Of what does this tradition itself consist? These are among the questions I seek to address in this chapter.

South Asian Muslims are predominantly Sunni, and most belong to the Hanafi school of Sunni law (named after its eponymous founder Abu Hanifa [d. 767]). But about 15 percent of the Muslims in Pakistan are Shi'a, and the proportion of the Shi'a in the Muslim population of India is probably not very different. The Sunnis of South Asia have, since the late nineteenth century, belonged to several rival sectarian orientations (Metcalf 1982; Sanyal 1996). The "Barelawis" adhere to forms of devotional piety and ritual that focus on venerating the person of the Prophet Muhammad and Muslim saints. Others, however, have decried such veneration as a form of idolatry, and they have sought to "reform" these devotional practices in light of what they take to be the authoritative Islamic norms. But there are important differences among them on how to arrive at these norms. The "Ahl-i Hadith" argue that the foundational texts—the Qur'an and the reported teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (hadith)—suffice as the *exclusive* source of all guidance, which renders not only the saints but also the medieval schools of law unworthy of attention and, indeed, illegitimate. The "Deobandis," like the Ahl-i Hadith, affirm the centrality of the foundational texts; but, like the Barelawis, they also defend the authority of their Hanafi school of law. Hanafi

methods and norms, articulated in the course of debates that span many centuries, are, to them, the best available prism through which the Qur'an and the hadith are most authoritatively approached.

These sectarian orientations in South Asian Sunni Islam build on earlier religious trends, but they are also the product of the conditions that came about with the onset of British colonial rule in the mid-nineteenth century. Even as colonial institutions—educational, legal, political—fostered the emergence of a new, Westernized Muslim elite that was often even more suspicious of the 'ulama than were the colonial officials, many 'ulama saw themselves as being cast in new roles of religiopolitical leadership. The challenge of providing this leadership to a community faced not just with colonial rule but also with an increasingly assertive Hindu majority and, not least, with internal fragmentation could scarcely be more daunting. The emergence of rival sectarian persuasions in this milieu is but one of many indications that there was little agreement on how best to secure the interests of the Muslims or even on how to define those interests. On this, the 'ulama have continued to disagree, both amongst themselves and with the many critics outside their own ranks.

The aforementioned sectarian orientations have all had their own madrasas. By far the most influential of these was the madrasa established in the town of Deoband in northern India in 1867, which soon became the model for madrasas established all over South Asia. Thousands of "Deobandi" madrasas now exist in India and Pakistan, often with the most tenuous link—or, more often, none at all—with the "parent" institution while affirming the same orientation to which the madrasa in Deoband gave its name. Of all the sectarian orientations in South Asia, that associated with Deoband has been intellectually the most vibrant and politically the most significant. It is on the Deobandi madrasas, primarily but not exclusively those of Pakistan, that I focus in this chapter.[1]

Madrasa Learning as a Tradition

What does it mean to think of madrasa learning as a tradition? Among the most sacrosanct of the texts that comprise the curriculum of the South Asian madrasas are collections of hadith, six of which have been deemed "canonical" by the Sunnis since the thirteenth century (Goldziher 1971, 2:240–3). Hadith has long been studied in madrasas, though it is only from the late nineteenth century that all six of these collections have become part of the curriculum of advanced learning in the Sunni madrasas of South Asia. Other revered texts of the curriculum include works of theology and of substantive law—notably the *Hidaya* of al-Marghinani (d. 1196–97), a compendium of Hanafi law that, for centuries, has served

as the cornerstone of legal studies in South Asian madrasas. Equally prominent are medieval works on lexicography and grammar, which are used not merely to learn the language itself but to learn it *as* the medieval theologians and the jurists have employed it. That the 'ulama would insist on using what to all appearances are archaic texts to learn a living language is not easy to understand. But, as Bernard Weiss has argued in another context, medieval jurists tended to see language (lugha) as "essentially a body of conventionally established correlations between vocal sounds and meanings that remained constant over time—in other words, a firmly fixed and stable lexical code" (Weiss 1992, 117). It was possible to decode the subtleties of earlier texts, even from a distance of centuries, to the extent that the scholar was in possession of this unchanging lexical code, transmitted, much like other kinds of religious knowledge, from one generation to the next (cf. Weiss 1992, 124–30). To many 'ulama, works relating to this lexical code, even when written a long time ago, are thus not merely serviceable but a more secure guide to it than modern primers of the language.

But it is not just having centuries-old texts on the curriculum—or even a "curriculum" in any formal sense—that makes for a madrasa *tradition*. Indeed, the antiquity of the texts is not, by itself, constitutive of it. What is crucial is a shared engagement with works epitomizing facets of the 'ulama's scholarly learning and a certain agreement on the practices, the modes of discourse, associated with such engagement. The medium of the commentary is surely the most prestigious of these modes of discourse. Not all scholars even among the more prominent 'ulama write formal commentaries on earlier texts. And yet commentaries have continued to be written throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, indeed, to the present.

One of the most impressive of such "modern" commentaries is the *I'la al-sunan*, a twenty-one volume work on the hadith reports that deal specifically with legal issues. Zafar Ahmad 'Uthmani (d. 1974), the author of this monumental work, seeks here to expound on these hadith reports in a way that shows, against critics, the conformity of the Hanafi norms with the teachings of the Prophet ('Uthmani 1415 A.H; Zaman 2002, 40–50). 'Uthmani had begun work on this project some decades before the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, and the entire work was later published in Pakistan (and subsequently again in Lebanon). 'Uthmani was the nephew of Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi (d. 1943), one of the most influential of Deobandi 'ulama of all time, and it was at Thanawi's instance, and under his initial guidance, that the *I'la al-sunan* was written. Many of the most important commentaries produced by Deobandi scholars have focused on hadith, which, indeed, has enjoyed pride of place in the curriculum since the late nineteenth century. But Thanawi was also

keen to see the study of Qur'anic exegesis—which, contrary to common impressions about their Qur'an-centered pedagogy, has received considerably less attention in South Asian madrasas than many other disciplines—more firmly integrated into the curriculum. To that end, he commissioned the *Ahkam al-Qur'an*, an exegetical work focusing on the specifically legal (as distinguished from, say, the ethical) content of the Qur'an, which was later published in five substantial volumes. 'Uthmani was a member of the team of Deobandi scholars associated with this project. So, too, was Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (d. 1976), a disciple of Thanawi and the chief jurisconsult (mufti) of the madrasa in Deoband before the partition of the Indian subcontinent ('Uthmani, Shafi', and Kandahlawi 1987). In 1948, Shafi' moved to Pakistan to found the Dar al-'Ulum in Karachi, an institution that is now among the largest madrasas in all of South Asia. Besides a stream of juridical opinions, Shafi''s writings after his emigration to Pakistan included a major Urdu commentary on the Qur'an, specifically intended, unlike much of his other scholarly work, for a lay audience. His son, Muhammad Taqi 'Uthmani, currently the vice president of the madrasa Shafi' had founded, is himself the author of several ambitious commentaries, in both Urdu and Arabic, on classical collections of hadith. The Pakistani edition of Zafar Ahmad 'Uthmani's *I'la al-sunan* was also edited by Taqi 'Uthmani and published at the initiative of his madrasa.

There are yet other ways in which madrasa learning in South Asia presents itself as a tradition. Though Thanawi's desire to bring the study of Qur'anic exegesis on par with hadith and its commentary in Deobandi madrasas did not quite come to fruition, the multivolume *Ahkam al-Qur'an* that his disciples produced as part of this effort clearly belongs to a genre of exegesis well-known in premodern Islam. Mulla Jiwan (d. 1717), an Indian scholar of late Mughal India, had written a well-regarded work in this genre (A'zami 'Umari 1995, 113–29; Brockelmann 1937–42, 2:612), and many influential works of this sort had been written elsewhere. A return to this genre among the Deobandis was not merely a matter of elucidating the legal norms of the Qur'an, or of addressing issues of contemporary interest; once again, it was also a way of underscoring the sense of a living tradition.

Defending the norms of one's school of law while ostensibly writing a commentary on hadith reports is itself hardly an innovation of Zafar Ahmad 'Uthmani's *I'la al-sunan*. This had been done by others before, notably by 'Abd al-Haqq of Delhi (d. 1642) in the form of an Arabic commentary on the *Mishkat al-masabih* ('Abd al-Haqq 1970), for long a favorite compendium of hadith in madrasas prior to the late nineteenth century. The systematic study of hadith, a hallmark of Deobandi madrasas in South Asia, likewise builds on important earlier developments. 'Abd al-Haqq of Delhi is often credited, though with some exaggeration, with

popularizing the study of hadith in northern India in a milieu where the primary concern of the madrasas had been with matters of law rather than with hadith. And, in the eighteenth century, Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (d. 1761) had played an influential role in further integrating the study of hadith into the scholarly concerns of the Indian 'ulama. From the late nineteenth century, the scholars of Deoband came to build on these developments as self-conscious legatees and guardians of the 'ulama's tradition.

Experimenting with the Tradition

That madrasa learning carries a rich and multifaceted sense of tradition with it has not precluded the 'ulama's own (as well as other) efforts at reassessment. In the eighteenth century, an important initiative towards such reassessment had taken the form of a partial standardization of the curriculum at the hands of Mulla Nizam al-din (d. 1748), a member of a famous family of scholars. The madrasa curriculum, the *Dars-i Nizami*, still bears his name. But it has continued to evolve since Nizam al-din's time, for instance with the introduction of the canonical works of hadith into it in the late nineteenth century. Nor would the evolving quality of the curriculum be lost on Nizam al-din himself. He seems, indeed, to have been more interested in standardizing a *method* of learning rather than a list of specific texts (Ansari 1973, 259–78, esp. 259); and while the method itself was intended to socialize students into a longstanding tradition, some of the works through which this was done were of relatively recent vintage. Thus, it is noteworthy that, alongside much older and authoritative texts, the curriculum had included works that Mulla Nizam al-din would have regarded as nearly *contemporary* with him. One example is a work on legal theory, the *Musallam al-thubut* of Muhibb Allah Bihari (d. 1707 [Brockelmann 1937–42, 2:622–4; Gangohi n.d., 355–9]); another is the *Nur al-anwar*, a commentary by the aforementioned Mulla Jiwan (d. 1717) on the work of a fourteenth century Hanafi jurist (Brockelmann 1937–42, 2:264; Gangohi n.d., 217–9). Similar trends are evident in a curriculum for advanced studies in Ottoman madrasas, issued in 1565 on the authority of the Ottoman sultan Sulayman (r. 1520–66). So far as legal theory, for instance, is concerned, "the emphasis here is on works authored in the two and a half centuries immediately prior to the construction of the curriculum, rather than on older works" (Ahmed and Filipovic, 2006 [forthcoming]). The curriculum of the South Asian madrasas has continued to evolve, though, as we would observe later, it has increasingly done so in a highly adversarial environment defined by governmental proponents of "reform" and by deep misgivings about the nature and direction of this reform amongst the 'ulama.

The choice of particular texts or their durability is not the only, perhaps not even the most illuminating, indicator of shifts and reassessments in the 'ulama's discourses, however. Just as new books might be approached in ritualized ways, older and highly authoritative works may serve as sites for a reconsideration of established approaches. As part of Islam's foundational texts, and with an authority second only to that of the Qur'an, the corpus of hadith might be thought to provide a much less fertile ground than, say, an evolving law for discourses that depart from earlier understandings. Yet even the madrasa-scholarship on hadith has allowed some reconsideration of earlier positions; and it has done so even in conditions of colonial rule, when madrasas often echoed with the rhetoric of conserving and defending their tradition against a host of external threats. A commentary on the hadith collection of al-Bukhari (d. 870) by Anwarshah Kashmiri (d. 1933), one of the most outstanding of Deobandi scholars of the early twentieth century, offers an illustration. This four-volume commentary had originated in lectures on hadith that were transcribed and later published by his students (al-Kashmiri 2000). Among Kashmiri's major goals in these lectures was to defend the norms of the Hanafi school of law, and he did so in what his students saw as a lively conversation with distinguished commentators of earlier centuries (cf. Gilani n.d., 78–141, esp. 99–101). Yet his defense of the Hanafi norms was also accompanied by an unusual degree of openness to exegetical departures from more conventional approaches. In his commentary, he argued, for instance, that the foundational texts of the shari'a often put forth pronouncements of a general nature but it remains for the *mujtahid*s—those capable of sustained effort (*ijtihad*) with reference to the foundational texts to arrive at legal rulings on hitherto unregulated matters, yet in conformity with the methods laid down by the legal tradition (cf. Gerber 1999, 79)—to elucidate the various ways in which these pronouncements are to be understood or implemented. Ijtihad becomes necessary precisely because matters of detail are often left unspecified; by the same token, the lack of specification in the foundational texts not only explains but also justifies disagreement among the jurists in how they approach the texts in question. Further, just as an emphasis—characteristic of the Deobandi 'ulama in general—on the overall framework of adhering to the authority of established norms (taqlid) does not preclude limited forms of ijtihad, so too, for Kashmiri, is the authority of earlier modes of discourse not binding in all respects. Scholarly understanding of the foundational texts ought to be anchored in an earlier and ongoing tradition, but that, Kashmiri believed, need not take the form of specific textual proof to support or constrain every single interpretation (cf. al-Kashmiri 2000, 1:279–81; 4:150).

In his effort to find greater space for possibilities of rethinking legal norms, Kashmiri was not quite typical of the Deobandi 'ulama. But even his exploration of such possibilities looks decidedly conservative when compared with the views of 'Ubayd Allah Sindhi (d. 1943), a slightly younger contemporary and probably the severest internal critic Deoband has ever produced. Sindhi was born into a Sikh family in the Punjab in north-western India, converted to Islam as a youth, and then spent a number of years studying at the madrasa in Deoband. Here he came under the influence of Mahmud Hasan (d. 1920), a much revered scholar then teaching at the madrasa but also involved in what turned out to be abortive efforts to dislodge British colonial rule in India. Mahmud Hasan had sent Sindhi to Kabul in pursuit of these efforts. When the conspiracy came to light, the British exiled Mahmud Hasan to Malta, while Sindhi himself was forced to spend a quarter century in exile in Kabul, Soviet Russia, Turkey, and in the Hijaz. This long exile was profoundly enriching in giving Sindhi an unusually cosmopolitan perspective on Islam and the 'ulama—a fact that he seems himself to have recognized.

In his later writings, Sindhi was severely critical of most other Deobandi scholars for turning the promise of their reformism into a narrow sectarian orientation that had only exacerbated the chronic fragmentation of the community. The most important intellectual influence on Sindhi was the work of the eighteenth-century hadith-scholar and legal thinker Shah Wali Allah, and much in Sindhi's own writings can, in fact, be read as a somewhat idiosyncratic commentary on Wali Allah's thought (Sindhi 1998; 1970). Like Wali Allah, who had written in the milieu of a fragmenting political authority in India, Sindhi sought to unite varied Muslim groups on a common platform in late colonial India in order to collectively face the challenges confronting them. While Wali Allah had done much to invigorate the study of hadith in South Asia, Sindhi wanted to make the ethical norms of the Qur'an the basis of a new consensus. He went well beyond Wali Allah, however, arguing that these norms were universal, which meant that members of other religious communities could also concur on them by becoming aware that the Qur'an shared much with *their own* ethical norms. Whether or not members of other religious traditions would have warmed up to Sindhi's proposal to make the Qur'an the basis of an "overlapping consensus" (to borrow a term from the philosopher John Rawls), Sindhi was convinced that the 'ulama's conventional approaches had rendered their tradition irrelevant and their foundational texts unintelligible. "I have never been persuaded," he wrote, "of [the merits of] a religious education that works well with students of madrasas but doesn't with those of the [modern] colleges. If this is the nature of our religious education, then it can hardly be regarded as instruction in true Islam. The Qur'an has been revealed for the [benefit

of the] entire world: if we cannot explain it to the Muslims among the college students in the way in which we can successfully explain it in the madrasas, how then would we ever be able to teach the Qur'an to those who are not even Muslims?" (Sindhi 1998, 139).

Unlike most of his fellow 'ulama, Sindhi's view of the medieval exegetical literature was a strikingly unfavorable one, not only because he saw it as the product of a different age but also because the texts most popular among the Indian 'ulama had originated *outside* India. These works had tended to reinforce the Indian 'ulama's sense of intellectual subservience to exemplars from elsewhere, and he believed that they had impeded the religious and political initiatives they might otherwise have taken in their own milieu. Sindhi wanted the 'ulama to take their Indianness seriously, to embrace the fact that their tradition was not only Islamic but also Indian and, on this basis, to contribute to the common good of their own society. Wali Allah was, to him, a source of fertile ideas but he was also an Indian thinker of the highest caliber and, as such, more worthy of attention in the Indian madrasa than the earlier and ostensibly more authoritative figures from Iran, Central Asia, and the Arab world. Sindhi, too, feared the dangers of a radical break with the past, and invoking Wali Allah was, for him, a way of averting it. But the only sort of continuity he saw as worth preserving and, indeed, as necessary, was one shaped by a *critical* engagement with the earlier discourses; and the 'ulama's existing intellectual and pedagogical practices seemed to him to be altogether inadequate. The implications of the thoroughgoing reorientation Sindhi was calling for were never lost on his fellow 'ulama. For all their reverence for Wali Allah, Sindhi's enterprise has always seemed to them to be too much of a departure from existing norms and practices, with the result that he has remained a marginal figure with few successors among the 'ulama (Zaman 2006).

One partial parallel to Sindhi's project is offered, however, by the work of Wahid al-din Khan (b. 1925), a traditionally educated Indian religious scholar who has long remained severely critical of fellow 'ulama for what he sees as their inability to recognize the radically changed conditions in which Islam and Muslims find themselves in the modern world. Like Sindhi, he too views the 'ulama as committed to a scholarly tradition that is the product of a very different age, a tradition that does not offer obvious or appropriate solutions to contemporary needs. His is a call for a thoroughgoing critique and reevaluation of Islamic legal thought, yet it is also marked by considerable optimism. For he sees the conditions of modernity not only as imposing the challenge of this reevaluation on Muslims but also as providing the freedom of conscience and other unprecedented rights with which to undertake and accomplish it (cf. Zaman 2002, 181–91).

Wahid al-din Khan, too, has been severely criticized by other Indian 'ulama (cf. Qasimi 1990). Even so, it is no accident that it is an *Indian* rather than a Pakistani religious scholar who has offered this sort of a contemporary internal critique of the 'ulama's tradition. Since the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the social and economic condition of the Indian Muslims has witnessed a steady decline, which has been only exacerbated with the rise of Hindu nationalism in recent decades. As Barbara Metcalf notes in her contribution to this volume, it is as a *religious* community that the Muslims have typically been viewed in India, which serves both to divert attention from their very real economic problems and to reproduce suspicions about their secret devotion to Pakistan, the "Islamic state" next door. Partly, perhaps, in consequence of viewing Muslims as a religious community, the state itself has sometimes tended to see the religious leaders of the Muslim community as its "true" representatives, thereby reinforcing conservative trends within the community (Hasan 1997, 323). Despite all this, however, the state does, in fact, take its secular and democratic commitments seriously, which means that the ground is not altogether infertile for voices such as those of Wahid al-din Khan. There is, indeed, a genuine sense in which the freedom of conscience of which he speaks makes critiques like his possible. The situation is very different in Pakistan, however, as we will observe in the following section.

The State, Madrasas, and Religiopolitical Activism

The 'ulama and the governing elite in Pakistan have usually been very suspicious of each other. But the state professes to be an "Islamic Republic," and even those governments the 'ulama have seen as most hostile to them—the regimes headed by General Muhammad Ayub Khan (1958–69), Zulfiqar 'Ali Bhutto (1971–77), and General Pervez Musharraf (1999–) —have often affirmed their commitment to Islamic norms. Other regimes, notably that of General Muhammad Zia al-Haqq (1977–88), have been nothing if not extravagant in their Islamic rhetoric, in part, perhaps, as a means of bolstering a tenuous political legitimacy. Precisely what the Islamic commitments of the state ought to consist in is a matter of great uncertainty, however, even as demands that the state ought to *demonstrate* its Islamic identity have remained unabated. Among the most consistent and vociferous of those who have made such demands are the 'ulama, often in alliance with the Islamists; and the state has offered them many opportunities to do so.

Uncertainties about how to translate Islam in public life have led, for instance, to controversies about just who the "Muslims" are in whose

interest the state is supposed to exist. The Ahmadis, a community originating in late nineteenth-century India that sees its founder—Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908)—as a prophet, is anathematized by most other Muslims for contravening the Islamic tenet that Muhammad was the last of God's prophets (on the Ahmadis, see Friedmann 1989). But more was thought to be necessary in what professes to be an Islamic state. Thus the 'ulama successfully agitated to have the Ahmadis officially declared non-Muslims in Pakistan, a demand that led first to a constitutional amendment on the definition of a Muslim (1974) and then to further repressive measures, in the 1980s, to prevent the Ahmadis from using any Islamic symbols in their own religious practice.

Significantly the 1980s also saw similar demands with reference to the Shi'a, and increasing violence between militant groups of Shi'i and Sunni persuasions (Zaman 2002, 111–35). This conflict had to do with questions about the specific *sectarian* identity that an Islamic state should adopt if it was to be "truly" Islamic, and the resistance of a Muslim minority (the Shi'a) to the implementation of a law (according to the Sunni-Hanafi norms) it did not recognize. It also owed much, of course, to the impact of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The success of a movement led by Shi'i 'ulama had infused even minority Shi'i communities in the Middle East and Pakistan with a new vigor, just as it created grave misgivings among the 'ulama in India and Pakistan—as well as in many an Arab state—about Iran's intention to "export" its Shi'i revolution. But whatever the Iranian Revolution may have contributed to it, the unresolved and sometimes bitter debates on the place of Islam in Pakistan's public life were nonetheless indispensable to the articulation and escalation of this sectarian conflict. And madrasas have provided participants, leadership, and intellectual justification in this conflict.

The war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the influx of more than three million Afghan refugees into Pakistan, and Pakistan's active involvement in the war effort together comprise another complex facet in the history not just of Pakistan but also of its madrasas. Along with Afghans, young men from Pakistan also participated in the war and, on their return, not infrequently became part of the militant sectarian organizations. Many madrasas counted veterans of this Afghan struggle among their students, and numerous madrasas came into existence specifically to cater to the needs of young Afghan refugees. After their rise to power in Afghanistan, the rabidly anti-Shi'a Taliban continued to maintain close links with leading Pakistani madrasas and their 'ulama.

Few institutions better typify the variegated involvement of madrasas in facets of religiopolitical radicalism in Pakistan than does the Jami'at al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya, a leading Deobandi madrasa of Karachi founded in 1955 by Muhammad Yusuf Banuri (d. 1977). Banuri was a distinguished

scholar in his own right but he is also remembered in Deobandi circles as the star pupil of the aforementioned Anwarshah Kashmiri (on Banuri's career and the history of this madrasa, see *Bayyinat* 1978). In 1937, Banuri had gone to Egypt with the purpose both of introducing the work of Deobandi scholars in the Arab Middle East and specifically to oversee the publication of Kashmiri's four-volume hadith-commentary. Later in his career, Banuri wrote a six-volume commentary that purports to build on Kashmiri's unpublished lectures on another classical collection of hadith (Banuri 1986–89). But Banuri also directed some of his energies, and those of his madrasa, towards combating theological and other opponents. In 1974, he came to lead the Association for the Defense of the Finality of [Muhammad's] Prophethood, and it was this organization that spearheaded the countrywide agitation leading to the Ahmadis being declared a non-Muslim minority in Pakistan. The Ahmadis were not the only target of Banuri's religiopolitical activities, however. In the 1960s, the monthly journal of his madrasa had been among the most vociferous critics of the modernist scholar Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988), who was then the director of the Central Institute of Islamic Research in Karachi (and later a professor of Islamic thought at the University of Chicago). This institution had been established under the Pakistani constitution of 1962 to offer guidance to the government in all matters Islamic. But it has often been seen by the 'ulama with grave misgivings, and Fazlur Rahman's training in Western institutions of learning, his sustained efforts towards a rethinking of Islamic norms, his severe criticism of the traditionally educated scholars and, not least, his association with an authoritarian and secularizing Pakistani government made him into a veritable symbol of all that the 'ulama found threatening in Islamic modernism. Here again, Banuri led the charge in castigating modernist interpretations of Islam, affirming the authority of the 'ulama, and resisting governmental efforts to regulate the affairs of the madrasas (cf. Banuri n.d., 1988, 1:600–37; 2:558–86).

With Banuri's death in 1977, the mantle of his religiopolitical activism was inherited by others within his madrasa. One of Banuri's younger colleagues in this madrasa, Muhammad Yusuf Ludhianawi (d. 2000), remained at the forefront of efforts to impose further, state-sanctioned, disabilities on the Ahmadis long after they had been declared non-Muslims in Pakistan. In the aftermath of the Iranian revolution, however, it was against the Shi'a that Ludhianawi's attention, and that of some of his associates at the madrasa, came increasingly to be focused. While there was much greater agreement among the Deobandi 'ulama on the Ahmadis than there is on the Shi'a, several prominent Deobandis have held that Twelver Shi'i beliefs regarding their imams and certain Shi'i rituals (which often involved cursing the Prophet Muhammad's leading companions for

their role in preventing the first imam's succession to Muhammad) effectively put them outside the bounds of Islam (cf. Nu'mani n.d.). On this view, the proper definition of a "Muslim" had as little room for the Shi'a as it did for the Ahmadis; and it is no coincidence that some of those who had been active in the anti-Ahmadi struggle in Pakistan came to assume leadership roles in the radical sectarian politics of the 1980s and beyond.

In the mid-1980s, a prominent Indian religious scholar began to circulate a juristic query among South Asian 'ulama about the legal status of the Shi'a, with the intention of arriving at a collective fatwa from—and thus a new consensus among—the 'ulama on the exclusion of the Shi'a from the community of Muslims. Once again, it was Banuri's madrasa, the Jami'at al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya, that played an active role in this effort. One of the most influential responses to this juristic query was written by Mufti Wali Hasan, a leading juristconsult of this madrasa, whose fatwa was then circulated for the assent of other Pakistani 'ulama (Nu'mani n.d., 2:75–7). While prominent professors of hadith and law associated with this madrasa did nothing more—on this or other occasions—than provide or affirm *intellectual* justifications for viewing the Shi'a and their beliefs as an ominous threat to Islam, such justifications could scarcely have failed to bolster the legitimacy and the morale of the foot soldiers engaged in violent conflict with their sectarian opponents. The opponents, in turn, have often seen these scholars as high value targets. Habib Allah Mukhtar, the president of this madrasa, was assassinated in 1997 (*Dawn* 1997), Ludhianawi in 2000 (*Dawn* 2000), and Nizam al-din Shamzai, the chief jurisconsult (mufti) of this madrasa and its professor of hadith, in 2004 (*Dawn* 2004c)—all presumably by Shi'i militants.

Nor did some of those associated with this madrasa forgo opportunities to participate in anti-Soviet warfare in Afghanistan, though certain other madrasas—notably, the Dar al-'Ulum Haqqaniyya of the North-West Frontier Province—were much more active than the Jami'at al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya in the war effort. Banuri had spent the last three decades of his life in Karachi and, prior to that, in regions that became part of postindependence India; but his ancestral roots lay in the North-West Frontier Province, the province that borders Afghanistan, and it was in Kabul itself that he had received his early religious education (cf. *Bayyinat* 1978, 9, 25). Some other prominent members of the madrasa (e.g., Shamzai) likewise have had ethnic ties with the Frontier Province, and this no doubt facilitated the madrasa's links with those more actively involved in the Afghan war and later with the Taliban. Shamzai, held in especial esteem by the Taliban (Yusufzai 2004), condemned the terrorist attacks of September 11 and tried briefly to persuade the Taliban to negotiate with the United States in trying to avert a military conflict. But he also issued a fatwa that called for a jihad in the event of a U.S. attack on Afghanistan

(*Dawn* 2001a); and he was unsparing in his denunciation of General Pervez Musharraf for his support of the American war effort in Afghanistan (*Dawn* 2001b).

The madrasa's radical activism has also extended to the Muslim separatist movement in Indian Kashmir, a Muslim majority province long claimed by Pakistan as rightfully belonging to it. While Pakistan has always denied Indian allegations of active involvement in destabilizing the Indian control of this disputed territory, many militant Muslim groups active in Kashmir have been based in Pakistan; and it was only after the two countries nearly came to war in 2002 that some of these groups were outlawed in Pakistan. Mas'ud Azhar, the founder of one of these groups—the Jaysh-i Muhammad— had closer ties with this madrasa than with most others; and in early 2001, both Yusuf Ludhianwi and Shamzai are said to have "pledged . . . [their] loyalty" to him (*Dawn* 2004b). It is, finally, in this same madrasa that 'Umar Shaykh Muhammad, the mastermind behind the kidnapping and murder of the *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl in January 2002, is rumored to have briefly stayed (Lévy 2003, 289). Of all the Pakistani madrasas, the Jami'at al-'Ulum's reputation for militant activism is surely the best deserved.

Here we are a long way from the serious scholarly pursuits of Banuri, let alone of his mentor Anwarshah Kashmiri. It is remarkable how many of the major crises in the history of Pakistan are inscribed in the career of this madrasa: the anti-Ahmadi agitation; the Sunni and Shi'i sectarian conflict; Pakistan's extensive support for the Afghan war; the armed struggle against the Indian government in Kashmir; and the rise and fall of the Taliban. The point here is not, of course, that the madrasa and the state have necessarily, or even usually, been ranged on the same side. More often than not, those associated with this madrasa have been severely critical of the Islamic credentials of the governing elite and of their policies. Thus the 'ulama, and not just those of the Jami'at al-'Ulum, often see the exclusion of the Ahmadis from the definition of a Muslim as taking place in the face of severe resistance by the state; and while many Deobandi 'ulama and the government had collaborated during the Afghan war and in helping the Taliban come to power, the realignment of the state with the U.S.-led War on Terror severely strained the relations between those 'ulama and the governing elite. My point is, rather, that the ambiguous yet very prominent place of Islam in the public life of Pakistan—a place routinely affirmed even by governments the 'ulama and the Islamists castigate as lacking Islamic commitments—provides the necessary conditions in which madrasas such as the Jami'at al-'Ulum have become increasingly radicalized. For all its efforts to curtail expression of this militant radicalism, it is inconceivable in a context other than that provided by the Pakistani state itself.

Two caveats are in order, however. First, that the state provides the necessary context in which the history of the Jami'at al-'Ulum ought to be located does not mean that all madrasas are necessarily given to militant religiopolitical activism simply because they all inhabit a shared context. Madrasas belonging to other sectarian orientations, especially the Barelawis, are far less involved in the sort of sectarian radicalism that the Deobandis have come to represent in Pakistan. But Deobandi madrasas, and the 'ulama associated with them, reveal significant differences within their own ranks—differences that are not obscured by their affinities. For instance, while Mufti Muhammad Shafi', the founder of the Dar al-'Ulum of Karachi, had worked closely with Muhammad Yusuf Banuri on many projects (Taqi 'Uthmani 1998, 92–4), Shafi''s madrasa has carefully avoided the sort of religiopolitical activism, even the strident rhetoric, that has long been the hallmark of Banuri's. And this was as true prior to September 11 as it is in its aftermath. The 'ulama of the Dar al-'Ulum are no friends of either the Ahmadis or of the Shi'a. Yet, this madrasa has again kept its distance from the violent agitation directed against members of these communities. Conversely, the intellectual output of the Dar al-'Ulum has been much more extensive, continuous, and varied than that of Banuri's Jami'at al-'Ulum. Taqi 'Uthmani, the current vice president of the Dar al-'Ulum, is one of the most prolific of the 'ulama anywhere in contemporary Islam, his writings ranging from commentaries on classical collections of hadith, to "Islamic finance" (on which he has written primarily for an English readership [Taqi 'Uthmani 2002]), to problems pertaining to the implementation of Islamic law in Pakistan. Only a narrow and unilluminating definition of the "political" might allow us to think of the Dar al-'Ulum of Karachi as not interested in shaping religiopolitical currents in the state or as not involved in them. And yet, this Deobandi madrasa has remained very different in its trajectory from Banuri's Jami'at al-'Ulum. The ambivalent but ample space that the state has provided for contestation on all matters Islamic doesn't, in itself, determine the directions in which particular madrasas have evolved. And these directions have remained varied.

The second caveat brings us back to the scholarly tradition, which, along with political factors, *also* comprises part of the context in which exclusionary discourses have been translated into militant practice. This tradition has continued to exist in the modern world, but so too has the variety of views that it encapsulates. The discourses even of a single traditionalist scholar might point in more than one direction. For instance, as observed earlier, Anwarshah Kashmiri had tentatively explored ways in which new possibilities of ijtihad and a rethinking of Islamic norms might be attempted. Modernist Muslims like the influential poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) are said to have greatly admired Kash-

miri and, indeed, to have wanted to work with him on projects of legal reform (Kondu 1976, 352–4). But Kashmiri also spent his later years writing hard-hitting polemics against the Ahmadis (al-Kashmiri 1397 A.H.; 1988). There were those who, for all their distaste for the Ahmadis, were willing to see them as *Muslims* holding erroneous beliefs (cf. Daryabadi 1990, 260–1). Kashmiri insisted, however, that certain fundamentals of the faith defined the community's proper boundaries, and Ahmadi beliefs put them outside those boundaries. But the Ahmadis need not have been his only target. The accusation of denying the fundamentals of the faith is a flexible one, after all; and it can equally be directed against modernist hermeneutics, for instance, as well as against the Shi'a.

The particular doctrinal positions held by the 'ulama as regards their sectarian and other rivals are not necessarily intended for practical application. In the first instance, they ought to be seen as part of a long-lived and ongoing tradition of discourse on juridical and theological matters (cf. Zaman 2005, 64–70). Yet they *do* remain available to be translated into practice as well: Kashmiri's sectarian discourses were intended not merely as a theoretical explication of what constituted the proper boundaries of the community, but as a way of excluding the Ahmadis from it. And Kashmiri's disciples and admirers in Pakistan, especially at the Jami'at al-'Ulum, have striven hard to help turn the implications of his position into a much more sinister practical application. As we have seen, this translation of exclusionary sectarian positions would be inconceivable without the political context in which it has taken place in Pakistan. But it is also true that these positions continue to form part of the 'ulama's discursive repertoire, brought to the fore or ignored in particular circumstances, but seldom ruled irrevocably inadmissible.

This fact reflects, paradoxically, both a strength and a weakness of the 'ulama's scholarly culture. The strength is, of course, that preserving a range of possible options allows considerable maneuverability to the 'ulama in adapting themselves to change while still professing to be guided by their tradition. The constraint, however, derives from the very nature of this tradition. As Walid Saleh has argued with reference to the history of medieval Islamic exegesis, once a particular position has found its way into the tradition, even if as one among several acceptable positions, there is no easy way of being able to permanently dislodge it. Medieval commentators often dealt with this problem by juxtaposing what they took to be undesirable views with many more of a different tendency, thereby trying to displace one set in terms of another (Saleh 2004, 14–22, esp. 14–5). In modern times, the codification of the shari'a is one way of radically reducing the complexities of a multivalent tradition (cf. Messick 1993; Brown 1997). It is, however, the preferred option not of those whose authority rests on being able to negotiate this multivalence,

but rather of the modernizing governing elite with a very different intellectual formation. In many Muslim societies, the 'ulama have nonetheless been surprisingly willing to go along with codification, provided there is some prospect of *their* guiding this process (cf. Zaman 2002, 93–9). Yet it is also worth remarking that even the codification of aspects of the law need not do away with the larger scholarly tradition, which can, in principle at least, continue to offer varied possibilities (and constraints) to those schooled in it (cf. Zaman 2005). Precisely how new generations of the 'ulama *are* schooled in their tradition becomes, by the same token, an even more contentious question than that of how to reorder the shari'a itself (cf. Brown 1997, esp. 369); for it has to do not merely with the degree of the 'ulama's influence on processes of legal change, but with the very existence of the 'ulama as a distinct and recognizable entity. This brings us, finally, to the question of governmental efforts to shape the 'ulama's institutions of learning.

Reform in the Madrasa

Apart from notable exceptions such as 'Ubayd Allah Sindhi, much of the most vigorous discussion of the need for reform has originated not within madrasas but in government circles and, especially in postindependence India, among Muslim modernists (cf. Kaur 1990, 199–212). Most Deobandi 'ulama were distinctly unsympathetic to Sindhi. But the 'ulama have often been even more suspicious of governmental efforts at reform. To the extent that we can generalize about their responses, the 'ulama have tended to see governmental initiatives not as "modernizing" madrasas but as seeking to undermine these last bastions of authoritative Islamic learning, diluting the "purely religious" instruction offered in them and, thereby, undercutting the 'ulama's ability to reproduce and replenish their ranks (cf. Zaman 2002, 78–83). This extravagant rhetoric does not illuminate very much, however, either about what the governmental reforms have actually sought to accomplish or about the impact they have had on the madrasas. Both issues are briefly worth examining here, again with reference to Pakistan.

Major governmental initiatives towards reforming madrasas have taken place in the early 1960s, the late 1970s and, most recently, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. On the first occasion, in 1962, a government-appointed committee (including a number of prominent 'ulama but dominated by government officials) had called for the teaching of English (in addition to the Urdu language), mathematics, general science, and social studies in the madrasa (*Report* 1962, appendix I, esp. xxiii). In order to create space for these disciplines without excessively overbur-

dening the curriculum, the report had recommended a drastic reduction in the "unnecessary and out of date . . . nonreligious" materials, by which it primarily meant not only medieval Islamic discussions of natural science, but also of philosophy and logic (cf. ibid., 14–23; quotation at p. 14). The "strictly religious subject matter" was, for its part, to be emphasized (ibid., 14), and this entailed "an increased emphasis" on the Qur'an and hadith (ibid., 19). Despite disavowals by the authors of the report, the guiding conception in their recommendations was clearly that of a separation between the religious and the secular but also, and—in its unintended agreement with a defining Islamist tenet—more interestingly, of a religious authority and authenticity located not in an evolving tradition but squarely in the Islamic foundational texts. The larger goal of this reorientation simultaneously towards the foundational texts *and* modern knowledge was to enable the 'ulama to "address modern educated masses in a convincing manner," and to "present Islam in a rational manner so that it can be really understood and devotionally practiced" (ibid., 25, 1).

The second major set of recommendations on reform, put forward in 1979, was the work of a committee constituted for the purpose by General Zia al-Haqq. Though Zia al-Haqq's regime was distinctly more friendly towards the 'ulama than the Ayub Khan regime had been in the 1960s, the 1979 report was no less concerned than its predecessor with the unstated aspiration—never lost on the 'ulama—of bringing madrasas under close government supervision. But it went further in the effort to integrate the public school or "general" curriculum into the madrasas, and it offered a new and important incentive for the 'ulama's consent in this regard: the degrees awarded by madrasas were to be recognized as the equivalent of university degrees provided particular portions of the general curriculum were also taught in madrasas. Thus madrasas were to teach the entire general curriculum at the five-year long primary-school level; they were to devote one-third of the time to this curriculum during the next five years, culminating in "matriculation"; and they were to have English, politics, and economics as electives during the following four years, whereupon the successful student would receive the madrasa's equivalent of a bachelor's degree. This was to be followed by two years of further study, amounting to work at the master's level. Completion of work at the latter two stages was to be recognized by Pakistani universities, as well as prospective employers, as the equivalent, respectively, of a bachelor's and a master's in Arabic or Islamic Studies from a secular university. In turn, the universities' own master's curriculum in Arabic and Islamic Studies was to be the same as that of the madrasas (*Report* 1979, 65–77, esp. 66–7). Since the early 1960s, madrasas belonging to different sectarian orientations have had their own "boards" to coordinate their educational activities throughout the country. The

1979 report now also recommended the establishment of a single national organization to oversee these boards, thereby to further facilitate the standardization of madrasa education and its equivalence with mainstream public education.

That many of the recommendations of the 1979 report for the introduction of modern disciplines into the madrasa curriculum were similar to those of the 1962 committee suggests not merely a shared bureaucratic understanding of what needed to be done with the madrasas but also the limits on the government's ability to implement its reforms. Two decades after the 1979 report, the government of General Pervez Musharraf (r. 1999–) has continued—in the third major initiative towards madrasa reform—to urge the introduction of modern, secular, disciplines into the madrasa (cf. Ali 2005, sec. 6.2). But in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, this ongoing initiative is much more directly, and openly, focused than its predecessors on bringing the madrasas under government regulation (cf. *The News* 2002). Having a madrasa officially registered with the government is now required not merely to have its advanced degrees recognized by the public universities but as the very condition of the madrasa's legitimate functioning (cf. *Dawn* 2005a). The government, however, has yet to effectively implement this stated policy, that is, by shutting down madrasas that fail to register with it. The new initiative also envisages establishing certain government-supported "model" madrasas where secular learning can be fully integrated with the religious sciences (cf. Zaman 2005, 80–1; Ali 2005, sec. 6.1). But given that all registered madrasas are supposed to be imparting a religious education together with elements of the public school curriculum, it is uncertain precisely what—apart from government patronage, e.g. in the form of more lucrative employment opportunities—would set these "model" institutions apart from other madrasas.

As noted earlier, the 'ulama have often been deeply suspicious of governmental efforts to reform their institutions—more so, perhaps, than they have of the codification of the shari'a. Yet the impact of such efforts has not been insignificant. Leading madrasas of Pakistan now provide for instruction precisely along lines required by the 1979 report. In addition to "departments" for the memorization of the Qur'an, Taqi 'Uthmani's Dar al-'Ulum in Karachi has, for instance, a primary and a secondary school, and these serve both to prepare students for the Dars-i Nizami and to offer instruction in the public school curriculum. There is a separate department for Dars-i Nizami itself, graduation from which is the equivalent of a master's degree ('Azizur Rahman n.d., 22–8). Some students then go on to receive specialized training (takhassus) in particular areas. At the Dar al-'Ulum, this takes the form of a three-year program in the writing of fatwas (Azizur Rahman n.d., 37–8). The conformity of smaller, less

visible madrasas to government recommendations is less clear. Indeed the question of just how many madrasas there are in the country itself remains a matter of considerable speculation. In March 2005, Pakistan's minister for religious affairs claimed, nonetheless, that "more than 4,700 [madrasas] . . . were already imparting modern education alongside religious education" (*Dawn* 2005b), by which he presumably meant that this was the number of madrasas that included the public school curriculum in some form.

The impact of government efforts at reform has not necessarily been detrimental to the 'ulama, however. The equivalence between the degrees awarded by madrasas and those of the public universities, for instance, has created new possibilities for the 'ulama. Not content simply with mere equivalence, some 'ulama have gone on to receive master's degrees directly from the universities themselves. Taqi 'Uthmani has bachelor's degrees in arts and in law from the University of Karachi and a master's in Arabic from the University of the Punjab in Lahore (Zaman 2002, 83). Mukhtar Allah Haqqani, the compiler of the six-volume collection of fatwas issued over the past fifty years or so by the Dar al-'Ulum Haqqaniyya has a master's degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Peshawar (Haqqani 2002, 1:124–5). Some 'ulama have also been able to proceed to doctoral programs by virtue of the formal recognition of their prior degrees: after his madrasa education, the aforementioned Nizam al-din Shamzai of the Jami'at al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya had gone on, for instance, to receive a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the University of Sindh (*The News* 2004; Yusufzai 2004).

While the universities' recognition of the degrees awarded by madrasas was meant primarily to reward them for the inclusion of secular subjects in their curriculum (for instance, by making madrasa graduates eligible for teaching positions in schools and colleges that normally require a master's degree), this recognition has arguably also made the advanced study of Islam in public institutions more prone to the influence of the 'ulama. The recommendation of the 1979 report that the university curriculum in Arabic and Islamic Studies be the same as that of the madrasa at a comparable level may have affected the *university's* curriculum more than it has the madrasa's—a marked contrast with the evolution of the *pesantren* in relation to the State Institutes for Islamic Studies (IAIN) in Indonesia (see Azra, Afrianty, and Hefner, this volume). A greater exposure to modern forms of knowledge has also opened new forums for the 'ulama and contributed to new modes of discourse. The career of Taqi 'Uthmani of the Dar al-'Ulum madrasa is especially illustrative in this regard. For two decades (1982–2002), he has served as a judge on the Shari'at Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, a body established by General Zia al-Haqq as the highest court of appeal on all matters Islamic and

constitutionally required to have two ʻulama on its five-member bench. Some of Taqi ʻUthmani's work, e.g. his *Introduction to Islamic Finance*, is intended for a broad, international audience and, indeed, addresses issues on which, with some exceptions, the ʻulama have had rather little to say (Taqi ʻUthmani 2002). His Dar al-ʻUlum is not the only madrasa to publish in English, though it is by far the most active of the madrasas in this respect. In his accomplishments, Taqi ʻUthmani is clearly an unusual figure. But these accomplishments would not have been possible without a substantial exposure to modern forms of knowledge, facilitated, in part at least, by governmental reforms. The reforms proposed in the early 1960s had wanted to see the ʻulama "address modern educated masses in a convincing manner" (*Report* 1962, 25). Though the authors of these recommendations may not have intended it quite this way, they have helped expand the ʻulama's sphere of influence (for the comparable impact of the 1961 reforms of al-Azhar in Egypt, see Zeghal 1996). And as the case of the Jamiʻat al-ʻUlum suggests, this has not necessarily been accompanied by greater moderation in the discourse and the religiopolitical orientation of the madrasa.

Conclusion

The ʻulama's tradition, for all their commitment to it, has not prevented either their adapting to government-sponsored reforms or their benefiting from these reforms. Even Banuri had recognized that madrasa-learning no longer sufficed to meet modern challenges and therefore that it needed reform (*Bayyinat* 1978, 245). The benefits of modern academic credentials can, furthermore, be hardly lost on those among the ʻulama who have come to acquire them. Yet if it has continued to evolve—sometimes in highly strident, exclusionary directions, as we have seen—the ʻulama's "tradition" is not merely a rhetorical device for resisting unwanted change in the name of Islam. The ʻulama's discourses are guided, rather, by an often vague, itself evolving, but nonetheless enduring sense of the *coherence* of this tradition, which serves to impose important constraints on how far the effort to adapt it to change might proceed.

Significantly it is not only their own tradition but also the course of studies in the public school system that the ʻulama view as internally coherent, which is precisely why—for all their accommodations to it in practice—they have continued to have severe misgivings about a curriculum that seeks simply to join elements from the madrasa and the public school. This view of education is quite different from that of the modernizing governing elite, and not just in Pakistan. Benjamin Fortna has highlighted the great optimism with which Ottoman policymakers viewed the trans-

formative powers of modern education in the late nineteenth century. This education was widely thought to be the secret behind the advancement of Western societies; and, combined with elements of an Islamic morality, it was to be the panacea for all the ills afflicting a weakened Ottoman empire (Fortna 2002; also cf. Berkey, this volume). For all the failures of the Pakistani state in providing basic education to its citizens, or in helping create employment opportunities for those who have received higher education, the confidence of the governing elite in modern education as the vehicle of social and economic change remains likewise unabated. It is this confidence that also underlies the conviction that the introduction, inter alia, of the English language, mathematics, "Pakistan Studies," and computer science into madrasas (cf. *Dawn* 2004a; *Dawn* 2005c) would transform them in all the right ways and, indeed, that such education would have the same effects no matter where, or by whom, or in what combination with other forms of knowledge it is imbibed.

As noted, the 'ulama view education, their own and that in the public school system, in less fragmented terms than is typical of the modernizing elite (cf. Fortna 2002, 225). Yet—and despite the difficulties successive governments have encountered in reforming madrasas—it is a mark of the coercive powers of the state but also of the 'ulama's pragmatism that their institutions have increasingly opened themselves to what they sometimes continue to deride as a "mixed" education (cf. Zaman 2002, 79). The long-term effects of this pragmatic accommodation by the 'ulama, to the extent that they have in fact made it, remain uncertain. By itself, however, it may not suffice to curtail strident articulations of the Islamic tradition. And some of the pragmatism underlying it may derive precisely from the 'ulama's awareness that such accommodation does not necessarily diminish their influence.

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Notes

1. The precise number of madrasas and their students in Pakistan, and of those belonging to the Deobandi orientation, continues to be a matter of much uncertainty. The figures are unreliable even for the madrasas that are supposedly "registered" with the government, and subject to wild speculation in case of the "unregistered" madrasas. Nor do police reports and other estimates always make clear whether the figures provided are limited only to the registered institutions. One estimate put the number of registered madrasas in the country in 2002 at 9,880, of which about 7,000 were Deobandi (Rahman 2004, 79, 190–1). A 2002 report from the Ministry of Religious Affairs stated the number of registered madrasas to be 6,518; the number of students studying at these madrasas was estimated to be 1,065,927—a figure that included 131,500 girls (*Dawn* 2002b). According to another report, Punjab, the largest of Pakistan's four provinces, had 2,715 madrasas in 2001, with a total of 253,125 students. Of these, 1,069 were Deobandi madrasas, with a student body of 99, 907 (*Dawn* 2002a). A police report in July 2003 put the number of madrasas in the Sindh province at 1,248. According to the same report, there were 869 madrasas in Karachi—the capital of Sindh and Pakistan's most populous city—of which 466 belonged to the Deobandi orientation (*The News* 2003). According to a 2004 statement by the minister of religious

affairs of the North-West Frontier Province, there were "around 1,400 registered and 15,000 unregistered" madrasas in his province (*Dawn* 2004a).

A very different picture emerges, however, in a recent World Bank report on madrasa enrollment in Pakistan (Andrabi et al. 2005). Relying primarily on the most recent population census (1998), findings of the Pakistan Integrated Household Surveys (1991, 1998, 2001), and their own research, the authors estimate the number of those enrolled in madrasas at present to be "between 151,000 and 178,000." This represents, as they note, only 0.7 percent of all those enrolled in Pakistani schools (Andrabi et al. 2005, 10, 33, table 1; also cf. ibid., 4). But while the authors of this report are highly critical of newspaper estimates about the number of madrasas (their own study does not provide figures for the number of madrasas in the country or their sectarian distribution), they are rather less discriminating in their reliance on official census figures. Yet newspaper accounts about the number of madrasas and their students are typically also based on statements by government officials, and some of the skepticism towards these accounts should probably also be extended to extrapolations from government censuses.

CHAPTER 4

Madrasas and Minorities in Secular India

Barbara Metcalf

> We enter the Jamia Arabia Shamsul Uloom, opposite the Shadara Railway Station, in east Delhi. Maulana Zubair, the director is reclined on a bolster, picking his teeth. "The misconceptions about madrasas are a shame. If they knew, they'd never treat us with any suspicion," he says. Zubair established the madrasa in 1971, first in a mosque in Old Delhi, then, as enrollment swelled, at the present location, a disused mosque, which was a property of the Delhi Wakf Board, and nurtured it to its present status. The structure houses three hundred students, twenty-one teachers and five workers. The institute runs on charity. Zubair tells us that a nine- or ten-year-old child enters the seminary after passing a written test. At primary level, the students are taught Arabic, Persian, English, and Hindi. After four years, he is promoted to the middle school. If a child pursues further studies, he gets certificates such as Maulvi/Munshi (equivalent to Matriculation), Alim (B.A.) and Fazil (M.A.). We are then taken around the campus. All students and teachers sit on straw mats on the floor. Surprisingly, none of them carry any writing material. It is entirely oral education. The rooms are darkly lit. The working hours start from daybreak and continue till the night prayers. The staple diet is pulse and bread. The seminary provides a summer break. But the students are so poor, mostly belonging to Bihar, Bengal, and Assam, that they don't have the money to visit their homes. "The railway ministry has withdrawn concessions to our [i.e. madrasa] students," says the Maulana. Later he says, "We are situated in a Hindu neighborhood, but we never give a reason for complaint. You must tell others that we do not produce terrorists here. We are trying to produce angels."
>
> *—Paraphrased from Amir Ullah Khan, Mohammad Saqib and Zafar H. Anjum n.d.*

The institutions in India labeled as "madrasa" vary enormously. But the humble school described in my epigraph does illuminate several aspects of the prevailing context in which Muslims and their madrasas operate in India. Most Muslims in India, at about 140,000,000 representing some 13.4 percent of the population as a whole (India 2001), live in an

atmosphere of distrust. Their madrasas are particularly suspect, as true of India's best known madrasa, the Dar al-'Ulum in the small northern town of Deoband, and the shabby Jamia Arabia Shamsul Uloom in Delhi described here. Most Muslims in India are poor. Most Muslims, like all other Indians, will make many sacrifices to get education for their children, and children, like those whose long hours are noted above, are expected to work very hard. Madrasas may offer elementary education, with or without subjects like Hindi as part of the state curriculum; they may also, as here, educate some students to advanced levels of Islamic subjects.

Muslims in independent India have typically articulated a double goal for education: education that will foster their children's practical and occupational skills, on the one hand, but also education that, along with the preservation of Muslim Personal Law, will secure a distinctive cultural identity against the "Hindu" identity evident in public life and even government schools. Madrasas in India have in fact borne a particular burden in furthering these dual objectives, which are seen, one must underline, as *equally* crucial to securing Muslim participation in the larger economic and political life of the nation.

The Muslim population of the Republic of India found itself in 1947 in a far different position than anyone might have imagined even a few years earlier. Although the idiom of political negotiation during the interwar years had made religious "community" central to discussion of securing representation and forms of autonomy, the final settlement was far different from schemes being discussed seriously even in the early 1940s. Thanks to the "Partition" of British India into the two countries of India and Muslim-majority Pakistan, instead of five provinces with a Muslim majority (excepting contested Kashmir), there were none. Instead of many districts with a Muslim majority population, in all of India there would be only two. Instead of a Muslim population of 25 percent, there was a population of roughly half that percentage, for whom such safeguards as "separate electorates" (in which Muslims alone voted for Muslim candidates) and "reserved seats" (reserved for Muslims in political bodies, schools, and government employment) would soon be no more. Not only was the new nation born in horrendous bloodshed, but, within India, common sense made Muslims the culprits, the engineers of "vivisection." Conventional wisdom would turn Muslim Indians into "proto"-Pakistanis, at best forced to proclaim their loyalty endlessly, at worst the victims of systematic pogroms. Given the international hostility that has characterized Indian and Pakistani relationships in the decades after Independence, the "original sin" of Partition was regularly renewed, a mentality that served certain strands of thought in Indian nationalism.

Particularly since 9/11 and the "war on terror," moreover, Muslims have faced intensified suspicion, not only in Europe and America but in India as well. One of the worst pogroms against Muslim Indians was launched in the state of Gujarat in March 2002 with shocking acquiescence from both the state and federal government, both, at that point, under the leadership of the Hindu nationalist party (BJP). Madrasas have been particularly suspect as sites of fomenting "jihad" or storing arms, as the vignette of the Delhi school suggests. Evidence of any such subversion in any madrasa in India has yet to be found—in contrast to substantial documentation of paramilitary training and "hate speech" on the part of Hindu nationalist organizations and their schools (Sundar 2004).

It is difficult to generalize about violence against Muslims in India. Some areas of the country have been more "riot prone" than others (Varshney 2002). Violence against Muslims, moreover, has not followed a single trajectory. One line of analysis, recognizing the extent to which violence soared at the end of the twentieth century, sees anti-Muslim violence as a kind of surrogate for class tensions, which escalated in the late twentieth century with the liberalization of the economy. Rather than deal with claims by marginalized, lower-class populations, Hindu nationalist leaders found a convenient target in Muslims (and Christians), whose very religion was seen to mark them as not fully "Indian."

Whatever the ambiguities about violence and its cause, there is no ambiguity about the over-all status of Muslims. A national survey conducted over the entire country in 2002 confirmed the low socioeconomic status of Muslims, disproportionately poor, badly educated, and clustering in poorly paid, marginal forms of employment. The Muslim population is concentrated in economically backward regions of the country, especially the rural north, and is, overall, more disadvantaged than the population in India known as the "Other Backward Castes" (OBCs) (Hasan and Menon 2003). But the Muslim population also faced discrimination, and, despite recent changes in a few states, has been excluded from affirmative action, heretofore largely reserved in India for the ritually marginalized "Untouchables" and "tribals." A striking demonstration of marginalization of Muslims is evident in their numbers in the public services, including the police, army, and paramilitary forces (Khalidi 2003; Aleaz 2005, 562). At the time of Partition, the Indian Army was 30–36 percent Muslim; in 2003 it was 2 percent; statistics on the police are equally extreme. The first Indian Army Chief even published an article in the organ of the Hindu nationalist paramilitary organization saying "[Muslim] loyalty seems to be primarily to Pakistan," a charge belied by the record and contradicted by interviews with Muslim army officers in relation to the wars with Pakistan of 1965 and 1971 (Khalidi 2003, 10–11). In the pri-

vate sector, as well the number of Muslims in executive or supervisory roles, is appallingly low (Aiyar and Malik 2004).

Arguably, minority rights, particularly in relation to Muslims, have been the most contested issue in contemporary India (Aiyar and Malik 2004). The debate however, until recently, has barely engaged the socioeconomic issues just noted. This has been true of both the secular voluntary organizations espousing what in India is called "communal" (i.e. religious) harmony; and Muslim organizations focused specifically on protecting Muslim rights. Instead the focus has been on "religion," in part a reflection of the widespread "culture talk" that assumes any issue relevant to Muslims to be reducible to their traditional faith (Mamdani 2004).

Public debate in India, moreover, is shaped by the constitutional guarantees accorded minorities, guarantees explicitly defined in cultural terms. The key guarantee is that the Indian state is constitutionally secular, in the sense that all citizens are to have freedom of religious belief. Religious minorities are guaranteed the right to preserve their language, culture, and religious practices. They have the right to establish and administer their own educational institutions. Moreover, the Constitution continues the colonial practice of providing separate personal laws for different communities, "Hindu," "Muslim," and "Christian," so that there are separate, religiously defined codes on such matters as marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption, and inheritance. Of these, the Hindu code has alone been subject to legislative reform and thus has essentially become the "Indian" code.

The very fact of the surveys of socioeconomic issues noted above, however, indicates a new interest in substantive, apart from cultural, equality. Similarly some political strategies in recent years have emphasized the socioeconomic identity of Muslims with other disadvantaged groups (e.g. The All-India Backward Muslim Morcha, discussed in Sikand 2004). But it has been hard for the voices raised on these issues to be heard. Muslims themselves and other Indians committed to secularism have made religious issues central to debates so that socioeconomic discrimination and disadvantage have been largely ignored. With its focus on Muslim cultural reproduction, in this case in relation to madrasa education, this paper echoes the prevailing public discourse on Muslims in India. But it does so hoping to make clear the particular historical and legal context that has in fact produced this kind of emphasis among Muslims themselves. It also hopes to demonstrate the extent to which a commitment to religious education does not represent a frozen, blind obedience to sacred injunctions—as "culture talk" too often implies—let alone a source of covert terrorism, but rather represents functional solutions to a range of everyday issues in many people's lives.

Preserving Islam, Claiming Indian Citizenship

Many institutions and voluntary organizations in contemporary India give evidence of the commitment of Muslims to preserve Islamic norms and practices: the madrasas; pervasive Muslim-focused da'wa movements (like Tablighi Jama'at and Da'wat-i Islami); the cultural efforts of Muslim organizations (like Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-i Hind and Jama'at-i Islami); as well as the work of law-oriented organizations (like the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board and the Islamic Fiqh Academy). In part Muslims in India have found themselves continuing a colonial orientation when religious organizations cultivated cultural symbols that eschewed the power of colonial values in favor of an inner world free of colonial, Western, and modern standards. In so doing, participants then and now have sought structure, a sense of personal integrity, and bonds of sociality that served them in a variety of sociopolitical contexts.

If, in part, Muslims have continued the role for religion set in the colonial context in which cultural assertion, apart from political life, was the basis for community loyalty and action, Hindus, meanwhile, in independent India, have been the "unmarked" category, the default identity for what is "Indian." Yet it is crucial to see that there are key differences for Muslims, above all in the simultaneous quest, evident significantly in the program of the madrasas today, not only to reproduce Islamic norms and practices but also to make a claim on participation in the larger Indian society and nation.

While secular liberals, like Muhammad Ali Jinnah—the leader of the Muslim League who negotiated the separate state of Pakistan—as well as Nehru himself, were disquieted by Gandhi's religious idiom in political life, the 'ulama, in support of a united India, were in complete sympathy. The leaders of the Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-i Hind (Association of Indian 'Ulama), which worked in close alliance with the Indian National Congress, joined with Gandhi in imagining a free India comprised of religious community as a fundamental identity, each community preserving its own educational and judicial institutions (Hardy 1971). To that end, Islamic leaders saw no conflict between their nationalist commitment to creating India as a secular, democratic state, on the one hand, and, at the same time, engaging in educational and proselytizing activities to raise the standard of Islamic faith and behavior among India's Muslims, on the other. In this vision of the postcolonial state and society, religious leaders would play major political roles in the independent state. India would be a liberal democracy, but citizens would relate to the state not only as individuals but as members of a religious community.

With the trauma of Partition, however, Islamic organizations as such were quick to withdraw from political life completely and to focus wholly

on the second strand of their activities: furthering Islamic education and cultural life. The resolutions passed at the first meeting after Independence by the Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-i Hind, convened in Bombay in 1948, not only essentially served as a charter for that important organization but also reflected decisions made by other Muslim organizations as well. Most important, the JUH confirmed the decision that had been made at a meeting called by the most eminent Muslim in public life after 1947, the new Education Minister, Maulana Abu'l Kalam Azad, that henceforth the range of activities of Muslim organizations would be religious, cultural, and educational. Muslim organizations divided themselves nationally, developing dramatically different patterns in the various new countries of South Asia.

Not least of the characteristics of the Indian organizations would be precisely the focus on education. At the JUH 1948 meeting, no fewer than four of the resolutions addressed that issue, seeing in education the only hope of cultural preservation in what now seemed a dangerous and threatening context, evident, one might note, in another resolution that called for investigation into places where Muslims had suffered particularly severe organized attacks.

Already there was concern for creating some kind of board to create shared standards and oversee the madrasa curriculum. There was fear that endowments used to support schools and other religious institutions might be at risk. There was a call to individuals to find ways to further Islamic teachings among children of primary school age within "all their circles of influence." This was, in the first instance, not a concern with education to gain employment; not even a concern with education to produce distinguished scholars in the great Islamic tradition. The first and foremost concern was with grassroots efforts to mold children in their identity as observant Muslims. There was great fear that state schools would overtly favor Hindu symbols and stories and present an unfavorable picture of Muslims in India's history (Razi Ahmad Kamal 2003, 34–43). This fear would escalate, one might add, in the period from 1998–2004 with BJP dominance at the center and controversy over the "saffronization" of textbooks (Kaur 1990, 399–417; SAHMAT 2002).

It is difficult to document the success of the goal of bringing Islamic education to Muslim children in the decades since Independence; it is difficult even to ascertain such basic facts as the number of madrasas. A single journal, for example, recently published two articles, one calculating the number of madrasas in India at half a million (Ara 2005, 34), the second estimating thirty thousand to forty thousand (Aleaz 2005, 559)! An earlier, more sober estimate counted only four thousand (Kaur 1990, 293). Certainly enrollment at major madrasas has dramatically grown in recent years, and the number of madrasas over all has increased (Qamarud-

din 1996), but whether that growth is disproportionate to the growth of educational institutions in India or not is not clear.

Generalization about these schools, moreover, is difficult because the madrasas are in fact marked by nothing more than their heterogeneity. The term is used for schools at all levels. There are deeply marked sectarian divides resulting in different organizations and networks involved in schools. There is no single official entity engaged with madrasas since education is an arena delegated to the separate states, with the affairs of Islamic education in particular safeguarded to the community as a minority right. This heterogeneity is a distinguishing feature of madrasa education in India in marked contrast to more homogeneous patterns elsewhere, particularly where there is central government control.

Madrasas in India: Heterogeneous Levels, Sects, and Organization

The term "madrasa" in India may indeed include institutions as varied as a mosque school teaching the alphabet to neighborhood children, schools providing elementary state education along with religious training, schools that include "modern" subjects throughout, and, finally, elite institutions that are regarded as bastions of serious intellectual endeavor in the great Islamic tradition. It is likely, however, that the vast majority do little more than teach literacy.

At the elite level, in contrast, the Indian madrasas have long been known for their high standard of teaching, above all in the field of hadith. They long drew an international student body—until the BJP ruling government at the end of the twentieth century terminated admission to madrasas for foreign students, a ban that continues to the present. These students had come from Afghanistan and Central Asia, as well as from places like Malaysia and South and East Africa where descendants of Indian emigrants and others turned back to India for Islamic training. Foreign students also came because of such influential movements of Indian origin as the transnational da'wa movement, the Tablighi Jama'at, which brought Muslim students worldwide to study in their central madrasa in Delhi.

Students also came because of the fame of a particular Indian scholar or institution, like the Nadwat al-'Ulama in Lucknow, well known for its high standard of classical and modern Arabic and its international connections. Founded at the turn of the twentieth century by men associated with the modern-style college at Aligarh, the Nadwa was intended to combine full madrasa training with Western style education. In fact, the Nadwa has fundamentally operated as a madrasa, distinguished by

its encouragement of the study of English and its cultivation of a high level of written and spoken modern Arabic (Zaman 2002, 160–2). Today it claims over one hundred branches in ten states of India as well as in Nepal (Daarul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama n.d.). The Moroccan 'alim, Taqi al-Din al Hilali (d.1987), regarded as the main proponent of a Wahhabi-inspired Salafiyya approach in Morocco, exemplifies the Nadwa's international role. Hilali made numerous trips to Nadwa during the colonial period and even taught Arabic literature there for a time. For him, India was "the last and greatest repository of hadith study" (Lauziere 2005).

Already in colonial India the madrasa had not only become a centrally important site of cultural reproduction, but also one of denominational loyalties dividing Muslims. "Nadwi," for example, meant affiliation not only with a particular school but with the school of thought of the Nadwat al-'Ulama. Most Islamic schools in India are linked to some sect or *maslak* such as Deobandi or Ahl-i Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at [Barelawi] among the Sunnis; Ahl-i Hadith; Ahmadi [Qadiani]; or Ithna Ashari, Isma'ili, or Daudi Bohra among the Shi'a. These diverse orientations are a striking characteristic of South Asian Islam. The transformation of the madrasa, beginning in the late nineteenth century, linked in part to the articulation of such positions, suggests the extent to which the madrasa, pictured by its critics as an unchanging medieval remnant, has been, in fact, a product of its times.

In the aftermath of the brutal suppression of the 1857 anti-British uprising across northern and central India, coupled with the imposition of direct government rule by Britain, the Islamic scholarly leadership focused their attention on what were competing sectarian movements of cultural reform, particularly Deobandi, Barelawi, Ahl-i Hadith, and Ahmadi. These movements all understood the fundamental problems of Muslims to be religious and soluble by a focus on educational and moral transformation. All were concerned with loyalty to religious practice, with correct understanding of the teachings of the Qur'an and hadith. All sought to create an internal sphere where self-worth was measured not by colonial standards or by material achievement but by Islamic fidelity and moral probity. The differing orientations had two areas above all in which they competed with each other: hadith scholarship, and, directly connected to that, devotion to the Prophet Muhammad, both in terms of passionate attachment and in terms of fidelity to prophetic practice, knowable precisely by correct understanding of hadith. These two thrusts, one might suggest, have continued to define Sunni Islam in India (Metcalf 2002; Kumar 1990).

These reform movements were modern in at least two senses. One was in their very impetus in seeking an opportunity for autonomous action in a period of substantial constraints in many spheres of colonial life. The

second was in the embrace of modern institutional forms, of voluntary associations generally, and, in relation to the delivery of education specifically, in the embrace of new technologies of publication and the establishment of formally organized schools modeled on the colonial model: a set curriculum, a graded hierarchy of classes, regular examinations, an annual convocation to celebrate graduation, annual appeals (conducted by mail and money order) to raise funds, published annual reports, and so forth. Free standing madrasas multiplied, many now known by the sectarian orientations noted above.

The ancient city of Varanasi (Banaras) in U.P., for example, soon had madrasas affiliated with these competing orientations. The Jamia Islamia was founded in 1906 by Deoband graduates, followed by two other branches in 1913 and 1936 and a fourth in 1972. The leadership was taken by merchants of the "Ansari" community, all in the sari business for which the city is famed. The Ahl-i Hadith, most assertive in their prohibition of many of the customs associated with Sufism, which they saw as deviant, founded the Jamia Rahmania in 1898, supported in their case by an association dominated by leading silk manufacturing families. Their Jamia Salafia was founded in 1966 and subsequently their Jamia Hamidia Rizvia. The Barelawi orientation, most sympathetic of all the competing orientations to Sufi practices and the intercession of pirs, in Varanasi has been primarily embraced by the lower class Muslim weavers. This denomination has expanded the most in size and number among these three competing groups. Indeed a Sunni directory lists five "prominent" madrasas of "the Ahl-i Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at," the sect's preferred name, in Varanasi today (Raza Academy 2005). The split between the Barelawis and the Ahl-i Hadith is popularly labeled in Varanasi as one between poor weavers and rich merchants (Kumar 1990, 88–91).

At the same time as the reform movements were evolving among the traditionally educated, India was the home of one of the most influential "modernist" movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The key site for this orientation was, again, an educational institution, in this case the Anglo-Muhammadan College at Aligarh founded in 1875 by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, now Aligarh University (Lelyveld 1978). Aligarh was committed from the beginning to honing a Muslim identity among the elite, Muslims who would be educated as English gentlemen, fluent in the English language and in Western styles of behavior. At the same time, these Muslims would know and cherish their rich cultural and historical heritage. The Aligarh leaders favored a reformist religion, ethically focused and stripped of what were seen as folk customs and superstitions, but they concerned themselves relatively little with the textual and ritual injunctions of many of the 'ulama.

Thus a town like Varanasi, to continue that example, also came to contain many Muslim "schools," not madrasas, many identifiable as Muslim by their very names: Qudrullah Gulzar-e-talim (1981), Gulistan School (1970), Amiriya Muslim School (1976), Sir Sayyad Public School (1984), and the Anglo-Oriental Muslim Higher Secondary School (1932). These schools were founded by Muslims in the professional classes who considered themselves progressive and forward looking. Those associated with such schools regard the madrasas as too focused on religion; those associated with madrasas regard the others as insufficiently concerned. Class in the end seems decisive in choice of academic track, and those who can send their children to the English-medium schools, regarded as key to worldly success, apparently do so (Kumar 1990, 92–93).

Not only are educational institutions divided by sharp class and sectarian differences, but they find themselves in a wide range of relationships with government appointed boards. Since the 1990s, the federal Ministry of Human Resource Development has attempted to prepare its own Urdu-language materials to be used for secular instruction in madrasas, a project that has met with limited success. States may or may not have madrasa boards to supervise the state curriculum; Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Bengal are among those that do. The boards provide support in varying ways, which may or may not be welcomed.

Madrasas and the Educational Mainstream

To non-Muslims, according to Nita Kumar who has studied contemporary educational practices extensively, "Today the term 'madrasa' stands for Islam . . . in a heavily loaded sense of a place of biased and distorted learning. It is regarded, loosely, as a hotbed of terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and, in India, of opposition to modernity and progress . . . [funded by] 'anti-national external sources' " (Kumar 2003). Whether providing literacy to poor Muslims or educating Islamic scholars at Varanasi's Jamia Salafia, what actually goes on at the Islamic schools has no resemblance to the disturbing activities too often imputed to them. In fact, moreover, as Kumar demonstrates, there has been what she calls "a nationalization" of the curriculum, not only in the "modern" schools but in many of the madrasas as well.

This "nationalization" may be true whether or not the madrasa receives a government grant-in-aid (in the pattern inherited from the colonial period for religious and other nonstate schools, and described for Britain today in Mandaville, this volume). Thus the Jamia Islamia's main branch in Varanasi is also a Junior High School, government aided and recognized. Students sit at the end of class VIII for an examination, set, cor-

rected and graded by the U.P. Board of Education's "Basic Education" standard. Similarly the school sections of the Ahl-i Hadith institutions are governed by the U.P. Board and subscribe to the same syllabus. The Barelawi school too has gradually followed the pattern of seeking government aid. Children in these schools thus study the same curriculum as children in other institutions except that they learn Arabic and Urdu in addition to Hindi, as well as receiving primary religious instruction (Kumar 1990, 88–90).

Not all schools accept government aid, but the pattern of preparing students so that they can transfer to government schools is widespread. The Begawala Madrasa in Bijnor, for example, with its 1,200 boys and girls, is also recognized through the "Basic Education" scheme so that children passing out of the fifth class can get admission at another school; Begawala gets no financial assistance from the government, depending wholly on contributions (Jeffery and Jeffery 2002).

All these schools, located in India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh—with a population of approximately 166,000,000 of which 13.5 percent are Muslims (India 2001)—follow a pattern set as a goal by a "Religious Education Council" (Deeni Talimi Council) launched in 1959, namely that at the primary level any school offering Islamic education would offer a secular track as well. Nita Kumar estimates that the number of schools affiliated to state standards outnumbers others by approximately 10:1 in Varanasi so that most young students there receive a mainstream education along with their religious education (Kumar 2003). Recently, the state government of Delhi decided to establish a madrasa board since, by their estimate, over one thousand madrasas in that city alone, some operating from local mosques, were not registered under any authority at all. The goal of affiliation in Delhi's case was to support these schools to introduce secular subjects (*Islamic Voice* 2002).

In the higher grades however, those who stay on in the madrasa typically focus on Islamic subjects in order to earn degrees like *munshi*, *maulavi*, *'alim*, and *fazil* typically awarded at two-year intervals. Many of those who continue their training are doing so to become clerical specialists, but some transfer to secular institutions even after reaching these higher levels within the madrasa. Some universities, like the Jamia Millia in Delhi, founded as a Muslim institution committed to secular education within a Muslim context in the course of the nationalist movement, lists the madrasas whose 'alim and fazil degrees they recognize as preparation for admission to their university-level programs (Jamia Millia 2005). The state of West Bengal offers an instructive example of the integration of the common curriculum into madrasa education. According to the president of the West Bengal Board of Madrassa education, the syllabus in their 508 affiliated madrasas is the same as that of state schools, and their

certificates are recognized as secondary school and high school equivalents. In part because of the minimal fees, 12 percent of the students in these madrasas are Hindu, who, like the others, do a compulsory paper in either Arabic or Islamic studies in their secondary school. The madrasas also employ Hindu teachers (Mazumdar 2006).

Another example of close cooperation with the state and integration into the educational mainstream appears to be in the southwestern state of Kerala. Muslims in Kerala, part of a more prosperous society overall, less burdened by the aftermath of Partition, and more of a critical mass at about 25 percent of the population (of some 32,000,000), have had, fundamentally, a less fraught relation to the state government and to the larger society in providing Islamic education than have those resident in many states in the north. Not only madrasas but many government high schools in Kerala teach Arabic, currently reaching some 500,000 students. The government has worked closely with Muslim organizations to restructure their syllabi for the higher level of education, including English throughout.

These schools offer a posthigh school *afzal al-'ulama* degree prescribed by the state universities and accorded government recognition as equivalent to the B.A. (Sikand 2005b). As in the north, girls often out number boys in enrollment, and one school, the Anwarul 'Ulum Women's Arabic College, with three hundred students, trains to the afzal al-'ulama level as well as to a M.A.-equivalent two-year course (Sikand 2002). There are, to be sure, sectarian divisions here, as elsewhere in India, notably Ahl-i Hadith, Jama'at-i Islami, and (by far predominant) Sunni (here following the Shafi'i school), but the divisions seem less strident, and all madrasas are affiliated to a board associated with one of these orientations

In Kerala, institutions offering advanced Islamic training tend not to use the term "madrasa" (or "*jami'a*" or "*dar al-'ulum*," terms widely used in India to distinguish madrasas with higher level training). Instead they prefer English loan words like "college" or "academy." Thus one of the most prominent "madrasas" is the Darul Huda Islamic *Academy* (Darul Huda Islamic Academy 2002). Perhaps this usage is meant to assert a difference from an institution often negatively viewed. The Kerala pattern is, however, not generally known outside its own state. The schools there teach in Malayalam, not Urdu, but, in part with the view to exerting influence elsewhere in the country, some colleges like the Darul Huda Islamic Academy, with its many branches, are now enrolling north Indian students and even teaching some sections in Urdu (Sikand 2005a; 2005b; Darul Huda Islamic Academy 2002).

The use of Urdu by the madrasas, has, in fact, been seen as another obstacle to their integration into the national mainstream. In colonial times Urdu was the official language across the states of Bihar, the United

Provinces, and Punjab as well as a lingua franca for the educated elite throughout the country. Today the language is marginalized in terms of its official status. This is particularly true in U.P., where the constitutional commitment to primary education in the mother tongue has arguably never been kept for the Muslim population. Marked as a Muslim language and made the official language of Pakistan, Urdu has been suspect in independent India. It found its home in basically two places: the spoken language of the Bombay film industry and the educational systems of the madrasa (Metcalf 2003, 35–6). Thus a child engaged in Islamic education in many parts of India faces the double burden of required fluency in the national language, Hindi with its Sanskrit-based script, as well as knowledge of Urdu (*Social Scientist* 2003).

Urdu, written in a Perso-Arabic derived script, symbolizes the extent to which the madrasa serves the larger purposes of education and the community-specific purpose of preserving and cultivating Islamic learning and institutions. Apart from the extent to which madrasas provide general education, they are important because they provide any education at all. That very fact makes them part of a mainstream where educational resources are inadequate, but profoundly valued. Thus the first defense of madrasa education, typically, is that madrasas provide fundamental literacy and numeracy to students who may not otherwise have any education at all.

Madrasas exist in a larger ecology of educational provision in which education over all, and particularly rural education, has been sadly deficient given the skewing of limited educational resources in favor of the urban middle class. In a state like U.P, recent years have seen a decline in per capita expenditure on education. With market liberalization there has, however, been a massive expansion in private schools wholly or partly outside the state sector. Since these entrepreneurs depend on fees and donations, however, even they are not likely to establish these schools in Muslim areas for the simple reason that Muslim populations are located in the lowest rungs of society. Moreover, even if not associated with Hindu organizations as such, these schools, like the state schools, tend to be "replete with Hindu iconography and Sanskritized Hindi," so that Muslim parents may well feel disinclined to utilize them (Jeffery, Jeffery, and Jeffrey 2004, 35–6).

Madrasas at a minimum provide basic education; socialization to certain norms of proper behavior and knowledge; and a consciousness of an Islamic identity. This education, as noted above, is also increasingly being made available for girls, for whom in Uttar Pradesh, at least, typically the madrasa seeks to produce a "demure, self-controlled, respectable woman from the lower orders . . . [skilled as a] competent homemaker" who is also knowledgeable in her fundamental religious duties and rituals (Jeffery, Jeffery, and Jeffrey 2004, 1).

Beyond the value of providing such basic education and fostering dignity and self-respect, however, defenders of the madrasa also insist on the legitimacy of the institutions to train scholars "to interpret Islam in relation to the demands of the specific time," a training comparable to that for other professions (Alam 2002). The historian Muzaffar Alam, for example, insists that the criticism of the madrasa is misplaced for two reasons. First, "the purpose of madrasa," he writes, "is not to produce engineers and doctors." Second, many madrasas, as already made clear, do teach modern subjects. Their motive in doing so for those who will emerge as Islamic scholars is to better equip them to play their role as interpreters and guides. It is to this end that the madrasa at Deoband, for example, teaches English, computers, and subjects like history and general sciences—as well as their ultimate claim to public legitimacy, chapters of the Indian Constitution (Daarul Uloom Deoband-India n.d). In addition, some madrasas offer craft and technical training to provide graduates with a source of livelihood.

For the most part it would seem that those madrasas that include modern subjects do so in two ways that do not challenge the fundamental cognitive style of traditionalist teaching. The madrasa may include vocational subjects, like tailoring, driving, or typing, or even offer more advanced technical subjects. A highly regarded madrasa in Jaipur, the Madrasa Jami'atul Hidaya, in India's northwest, for example, offers an expansive list of computer, engineering, and business courses. But these subjects, like the training in tailoring or typing, are wholly compartmentalized from Islamic courses (Qasimi 2002, 60–1; Ahmed 2002). As for training in core modern subjects, like history or comparative religion on the one hand and science on the other, at least for the most part they leave untouched the basic intellectual framework of received Islamic knowledge. The writings of an educational and social service organization in Mumbai, for example, support teaching "comparative religion," but use the knowledge gleaned to argue Islamic superiority (Qasimi 2002, 6–7). Similarly, as Arshad Alam has recently shown in interviews with madrasa students about science, some of them may, in a pattern known from discussions of the Vedas and Bible in other contexts, simply invoke "science" to show that all is foretold in the Qur'an: Islam *is* science. Far from being a critical methodology, he suggests, science becomes a tool of religion (Alam 2005).

Madrasas as Sites of Guidance: Fatwas and Holy Men

Finally, along with their goals in providing education and fostering an Islamic identity, the Indian madrasas also provide moral guidance

and spiritual direction to individual Muslims beyond their student community. Again the particular situation of minority religious culture—contestation and suspicion on the one side, charged symbolic value as the key to survival in what often seems a hostile Hindu majoritarian context on the other—is clearly at stake. In contrast to Muslim majority states, matters of Islamic personal life have been excluded, for the most part, from consideration by the central and state legislatures. Muslim personal law is administered by the state, but decisions may be seen as inflexible or, for some, unacceptable in part because often rendered by non-Muslim judges. The madrasa as the central Islamic institution becomes a central site of legal guidance. The madrasa also may serve as the site of charisma because of the presence of shaykhs and *murshid*s among staff members or because of the nearby graves of holy men once associated with the schools.

Not only may staff at madrasas be informally consulted on legal matters, but many have staff assigned to "Dar al-Ifta," what one school translates as an "Edict Issuing Centre" (Jamia Nizamia n.d.). The Dar al-'Ulum at Deoband launched a separate department for providing *fatawa* (singular: fatwa) and named one of their staff as mufti, as early as 1893 (Metcalf 2002, 146–51). Collections of fatwas have been published not only on the part of many individual 'ulama associated with the school, but also extensive volumes issued with the authority of the school itself. Today many schools provide Web sites and e-mail addresses to provide electronic guidance.

The Jamia Nizamia, for example, founded in 1875 with princely support in the city of Hyderabad, has long enjoyed considerable influence in its area. Its teachers have claimed authority based on Arab descent, academic pedigree, and spiritual lineage (Kozlowski 1995, 907). Jamia Nizamia is today a prosperous school, expanding in numbers and teaching to the postgraduate level. The students number one thousand, with an additional ten thousand in affiliated schools, apparently double the number recorded fifteen years back (Kozlowski 1995, 908). The Jamia recently opened a girls' college and plans to educate girls "up to Ph.D." It is wholly independent of government support and meets its quarter million dollar budget by income from awqaf, rents (including those from the "Jamia Nizamia Commercial Complex"), donations (including animal skins from ritual sacrifice), and token fees from boarders and seekers of fatwas (Jamia Nizamia n.d.).

The school's role in issuing fatwas, for which requests come by mail, by e-mail, and in person, is a particular source of pride, described as second only to educational work in the school's yearly reports. One particular source of authority for this school is found in the fact that every fatwa issued by the mufti is confirmed by a board of four additional professors.

Those who come in person encounter the mufti, seated on the floor with low tables holding folio volumes whose mastery, even memorization, is the source of his authority. They bring a range of everyday issues, feuds between spouses, problems of avaricious relatives, concerns about the terms of loans and mortgages, and the like. Some who come will no doubt consult the mufti, but move on to a government court. Many, however, welcome the Islamic authority of the mufti and his school and recognize his humaneness, evident in the classic effort of Islamic guidance to obtain balance among those concerned in contrast to the adversarial, legalistic style of the Euro-American derived Indian court (Kozlowski 1995).

A madrasa may also be a place of resort for those who seek spiritual guidance or the intercession of the holy, both dead and alive. Although less the case for the small numbers associated with Jama'at-i Islami or the Ahl-i Hadith, the mainstream 'ulama in India have in the modern period identified themselves with the *silsila*s of Sufi orders as well as with the disciplines of devotion and moral purification associated with Sufism. This orientation is particularly evident in those associated with the Barelawis, the sect of the Jamia Nizamia just described, an orientation sanctioned for this school, one might note, by a 1904 vision of the Prophet himself recorded on the school's own Web site recounting how one of the founders dreamed that the Prophet himself requested the diplomas of the Jamia to adorn them with his own seal (Jamia Nizamia n.d.). The holiness of the madrasa itself is attested to by the number of those who come for intercession at the founder's grave, covered as it is with the green scarves and garlands of those who have sought intercession. Visitors, students, and staff all stop at the shrine to seek the blessing it imparts (Kozlowski 1995).

The centrality of the institutions of Sufism is evident among the Deobandis as well, even if they are more circumspect in relation to the tombs of the holy than are the Barelawis. Thus Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (1879–1958), who served as the principal of Deoband for three decades in the mid-twentieth century, was squarely in the scholarly tradition of seminary management and scholarship, in his case as an authority on hadith. At the same time, his initiation at the hand of one of the great nineteenth-century saints, his presence in the company of that saint's pir, and his sojourn during imprisonment as the companion of yet another revered figure enhanced his own public role as a leading nationalist leader as well as spiritual guide. These roles were often conflated, one might note, as when the success of his political tours was marked by the counting of hundreds who had taken initiation at his hand. The four published volumes of his letters are replete with guidance on moral problems and devotional disciplines (Madani 1950–51).

Conclusion

Traditional Islamic education is questioned everywhere today by those who deem it unprogressive and stagnant, a challenge that carries particular force in India where the debate is not only among Muslims but within a larger society where Muslims have often felt themselves embattled. Yet madrasas have played a significant role in providing elementary education to large numbers of students as well as socializing them, one might say, to an identity as both Muslim and morally respectable. They have also sustained a standard of the highest quality Islamic training that has prepared Indians and, in some cases, students from abroad, to play such specialized roles as scholars, teachers, writers, prayer leaders, spiritual guides, and legal authorities. At their best, they inculcate great linguistic skills, analogical and other forms of reasoning and logic, as well as the content of a great cultural tradition. Ideally students learn a high level of self-discipline and morality. If one questions the quality of the instruction imparted, one should place it in the context of the education imparted in most of the other state and independently funded schools in the society as a whole. The madrasas additionally play a role, as described above, as sites of spiritual guidance and intercession. All of these roles must weigh into any discussion that education rooted in the sacred classics is no longer relevant to modern life.

But training also takes place within many madrasas to address the need for secular and vocational training, including coverage of the state curriculum, particularly at the primary level. This role of religious education as a complement to secular education is particularly noteworthy, achieved through voluntary means but fulfilling the same goal as the state-mandated curriculum of madrasas in Indonesia (described by Azra, Afrianty, and Hefner, this volume). Some of these schools also make available training in trades or technology (as did Deoband in its earliest years with teaching in Greco-Arabic medicine and book-binding) to allow scholars to be self-supporting.

It would seem, moreover, that the trend towards providing secular education within an Islamic context is an ever more important goal, constrained primarily by economic limitations. It is in this regard striking to see the resolutions of the most recent general meeting of the Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-i Hind, the organization so important in initially setting the track for Islamic education in independent India. The JUH now joins those asking for affirmative action for Muslims and urging alliance with other disadvantaged groups under the label of "Dalits and Minorities." This, in a sense, is also part of struggling to be included in the mainstream.

In terms of education, the JUH not only calls for renewed energy in founding grassroots "*maktabs*," now defined as "Basic Education Cen-

ters," but specifically calls on Muslims, "particularly their well to do sections," to establish "commerce, engineering, technical and medical institutions" to combat the "extreme backwardness of Muslims in contemporary and technical education"—while yet keeping them from the "anti-religious atmosphere" in government and private schools. These are to be schools that preserve "behavior, dress codes, worship and Islamic way of life," and they are to include separate schools for girls as well (Jamiat ul-'Ulama-i Hind 2005).

Islamic education in India is divided by sects, languages, and (limited) official jurisdiction. It is not susceptible to single policies or the decisions of any far-reaching board. Some points about Islamic education in India, however, seem clear, including an expansion in the number of madrasas and their particular role for the poorer segments of society. Also clear is the dual objective of the madrasas in providing both worldly and Islamic training. In many cases schools include the state-mandated elementary curriculum, and, in what appears to be an increasing number of cases, vocational training. But madrasas also, in the words of the Deoband Web site, continue to be the great, peaceful bulwark to preserve "Islamic identity and their culture, civilization and tradition" (Darul Uloom Deoband-India n.d.). The commitment to Islamic education and Muslim personal law are the more intense in India because of Muslim marginalization in the society as a whole. As the case of Kerala suggests, the most far-reaching changes in the madrasas may come in contexts of economic and political well-being that most Muslims in India have yet to secure. Nonetheless, the madrasas clearly have for the most part made critical adaptations, simultaneously guarding cultural reproduction and identity formation while preparing many students, as best they can, for employment and further education.

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CHAPTER 5

The "Recentering" of Religious Knowledge and Discourse: The Case of al-Azhar in Twentieth-Century Egypt

Malika Zeghal

In the aftermath of 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan, channels of Islamic education in the Muslim world have started to attract new interest. The role that the Deobandi 'ulama played in the Taliban regime in Afghanistan explains the development of this new and public interrogation around the place and function of Islamic education (Metcalf 2002, xxi–xxv). This new public media inquiry, while first focused on the Indian subcontinent, has progressively expanded to madrasas and religious education in the Muslim world in general. A by-product of recent political events, this interest converges today with a shift in the academic study of contemporary Islam from the sociology of modern educated intellectuals to the study of a group that for a long time historians perceived as progressively marginalized in the history of modern Islam: the 'ulama. The study of Islamic revival, political Islam, and, later, Islamic radicalism had previously taken place through the analysis of secular channels of education rather than religious ones. Further, the new Islamist intellectuals who had been defining their ideologies and politics within Islam since the 1960s were educated within the modern systems and familiar with the universe of Westernized knowledge (Kepel 1985; Roy 1991). The sociological observation of elites defining and transmitting religious education was not relevant to these perspectives; the 'ulama had started losing their social importance and centrality in the nineteenth century (Marsot 1972). In the course of the twentieth century, they became "traditional" actors while the Islamists, newly present in the public spaces of Muslim societies and reappropriating religious discourse, represented the consequences of processes of modernization.

Recent studies show, nonetheless, that the role of religious institutions in transmitting religious knowledge and providing religious education has to be reassessed and brought back into the study of contemporary Islam in order to understand their role in the refashioning of ideas and the stabilizing of identity narratives (Zeghal 1996, 1999a, 2005; Zaman 2002).

The Egyptian case is particularly central: it provided the terrain for the 1928 birth and development of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as the emergence, in the 1970s, of new Muslim intellectuals who read and interpreted the long genealogy of Islamism outside of the madrasa system and often against it. But al-Azhar, the Egyptian Islamic university, and its 'ulama, far from being absent from these developments, turns and differentiations taking place within this long ideological genealogy, have regained a new public, national, and transnational centrality in the second half of the twentieth century. The prominence of al-Azhar stems from its status as an institution anchored in a thousand-year-old history, in the modern state apparatus, as well as in local and translocal spaces. Using Douglas North's definition of an institution and adapting it to religion, I define al-Azhar as a religious institution in the following terms: "the humanly devised constraints" that shape the interaction between men and God, or to be more precise, a structure of mediation between the divine and the human that offers interpretation of scripture to the faithful, manages religious ritual and transmits religious knowledge (North 1990, 3). The case of al-Azhar and its relationships with other religious authorities shows that an institutional anchorage is necessary for religious authorities to be durable and to be able to compete in a religious economy where the sphere of Muslim authorities has become highly fragmented. Al-Azhar, with its long history of a more or less tight partnership with the political powers, is today an institution that anchors itself in the Egyptian state as well as in the social, educational, and religious lives of Egyptians. Its presence expands vertically from state elites and the 'ulama to students and ordinary people. It has also expanded horizontally, through its participation in recently emerging transnational debates using religious language. While this paper will not cover all of these aspects of the expansion of al-Azhar's territory, it will reassess the role of its 'ulama in the transmission of knowledge and ideas via the religious language authorized by their institutional positions in order to show their inscription in national and transnational political debates.

Today, religious education in Egypt is the object of multiple and overlapping definitions. Debates on the content, shape, and role of the transmission of religious knowledge, as well as over the interpretation of the tradition this knowledge rests upon, manifest themselves in large ideological, political, and intellectual circles. These debates over the form and meaning of the transmission of Islamic knowledge do not play out in an isolated religious sphere involving only the religious intellectual elites educated at al-Azhar. In fact, they have been developing in conjunction with policy questions emanating from state programs pertaining to the

"modernizing" of education in general (Carré 1979). The evolution of religious education is to be read today in relation to general educational trends in Egypt as well as in close linkage with the evolution of different religious interpretations of tradition. Religious education belongs to a multifaceted sphere exposed to Egyptian national debates as well as the transnational circulation of religious ideas. Therefore al-Azhar and the sphere of transmission of religious knowledge, far from being anachronistic institutions marginalized by the development of a modern educational system, are part of a complex sphere of symbolic production and social and political networks. Al-Azhar, as a channel of transmission of religious knowledge has been transformed into a hybrid space where multiple kinds (from the scientific to the theological) and levels (from simple memorization and rituals to ideological and political) of knowledge and interpretation coexist. This coexistence happens in a de facto state of plurality that can remain implicit, be publicly recognized, or become antagonistic and may lead to open conflicts.

Al-Azhar also provides a buffer zone between radical and/or political Islam on the one hand and state-defined Islam on the other, while at the same time receiving their impact and echoing their diverse definitions of tradition. Egyptian state authorities have striven to define al-Azhar as the citadel (*hisn*) of Islam, often describing it as the shield maintained by the state in defense of the tradition of the "middle way" (*wasat*) or the mainstream. This description may have many different meanings. For the Egyptian state, for example, al-Azhar produces an Islam that is far from extremist interpretations. But it is also possible to interpret the middle way metaphor in the sense that al-Azhar as a multilayered and complex institution is able to entertain many religious tendencies and stabilize most of them within its own territory. Since the revolution of the Free Officers in 1952, al-Azhar has been instrumental in building a public Islam maintained by 'ulama in order to produce a strong sense of national identity (Zeghal 1996). But, as many "peripheral" 'ulama contend today, it is also the place where the memory of Islam is kept and disseminated through education and da'wa, sometimes in contradistinction, at others in convergence, with the types of public Islam maintained by the state in negotiation with the 'ulama (Zeghal 1999a, 386). This public and explicit exposure of al-Azhar to a set of multilayered religious discourses, a consequence of the larger margin of maneuver its 'ulama have gained since the 1980s in Egyptian society, has recently allowed al-Azhar to emerge as one of the principal actors at the center of the religious sphere in Egypt in relation to a larger sphere of transnational circulation of religious ideas.

The State of Religious Education in Egypt Today: Diversity and Porosity

Religious education in Egypt revolves around al-Azhar, but also goes beyond the officially designed and state-sponsored religious institution. The Azharite institutes (*ma'ahid azhariyya*) cover urban as well as rural Egypt, provide the bulk of the religious education at the primary and secondary levels, and feed the Azharite system of higher education. Over the course of the twentieth century, they have progressively taken over, without entirely replacing, the traditional system of kuttabs, of which they represent a so-called modernized version. In the academic year 2000–01, 483,981 female students and 836,753 male students attended the Egyptian Azharite institutes (www.alazharonline.org).[1] The pressure of demand for education has certainly put a strain on al-Azhar: while in the early 1970s, the institutes educated around 90,000 students, this number had increased to 300,000 ten years later and to a little more than one million at the beginning of the 1990s (Zeghal 1996, 279). In the early years of the twenty-first century, we find 1,300,000 children aged from 5 to 19 belonging to the Azharite system of education, in separate sites for boys and girls. Azharite students in the primary institutes learn mathematics, Arabic, and natural sciences as well as Qur'an, hadith, and Islamic history. Religious knowledge and secular education are not really integrated, but taught in separate intellectual domains. Al-Azhar provides one of the channels of education that are available to Egyptians today in an educational market where the demand largely exceeds the supply. Today, the university of al-Azhar, with its fifty-five religious and modern faculties, covers a large territory from Tanta in the Delta to Asyut in Upper Egypt, and offers higher education to men and women, the latter having been present at al-Azhar since 1962, in separate facilities. The Cairo faculties, notably the three religious (and exclusively male) faculties located by the millennial mosque of al-Azhar in old Cairo, remain the most important, symbolizing the long history and centrality of the religious institution, as well as its relationship to political power.

The reasons for a family to send their children to Azharite institutes vary. 'Ulama and their students often objectify those reasons through lineage and/or divine intervention: al-Azhar education may be part of the family tradition and provides to its members a strong sense of religious and institutional identity. This identity is often reported by 'ulama educated at al-Azhar as a God-given gift constantly made manifest in their lives. To be an Azharite is to conform to a "second nature" that they acquire very early on, in the kuttab or the Azharite institute, not through institutional identification but rather through the very process of inte-

grating religious knowledge and externalizing this religious identity in attitudes and practices. As one Azharite shaykh told me: "I grew up in a religious family. Since I was very young, people called me Shaykh 'Umar here, Shaykh 'Umar there. They did not call me by another name. This made me very attentive to follow these imperatives. I had to show that I was a real shaykh. This means that we do not look at the shaykh in his external appearance, because we look at him as the shaykh, the guide. This has given me the desire to make appearance and behavior converge in me."[2] Another scholar from al-Azhar describes his first sermon with the following memories of his father: "It is my father who insisted that I study at al-Azhar. . . . Two months before his death, my father encouraged me to say the Friday sermon. A preacher is a shaykh. We were only kids, we played ball and so on . . . but when I saw that this was so important for my father, I secretly . . . prepared a sermon. . . . Two or three weeks later I said: 'Dad, I will replace you tomorrow for the sermon.' My father was extremely happy and said: 'Say it now, in front of me.' I pronounced the sermon on that day, and the day after, my father died. This was a very important moment in my life. People said: 'Shaykh 'Atif is succeeding his father because he gave the sermon and performed well.' "[3]

To become a shaykh is therefore tightly linked to education and discipline as well as to divine signs manifesting the religious destiny of a young boy, as exemplified in the theme of the death and succession of the father in the religious function of the Friday preacher. Azharite life-stories often start off with a "gift" to God, which confers sacredness to a future career:

> I can say that my father consecrated me (*nadharani*) to al-Azhar. Consecrated . . . this is much more than just specializing in some sort of knowledge, it has a religious meaning: if you want to come closer to God, you offer a lamb to the poor. You slaughter and you give away. Hence he consecrated me to al-Azhar and offered (*wahabani*) me to al-Azhar. There is a religious meaning in this. My brothers and sisters went to the modern public schools. As for me, I was consecrated to al-Azhar.[4]

A family's son is one of the terms of the exchange between the divine and the family. In a strategy of diversification of opportunities, part of the family offspring are destined to religious education, symbolically gaining more proximity to the divine, while the other children are integrated in the public modern system of education and enter the channels leading to the secular, modern life.

Today, young boys and girls attending the institutes of al-Azhar receive a small monthly sum, which can make an important difference in a family's stretched budget. While al-Azhar represents for the lower classes a channel for social and economic mobility, notably through migration from the rural village to the city of Cairo or to a provincial town where

an institute is located, the elites of al-Azhar rarely send their sons and daughters to an institution of religious education, but rather to modern schools and universities in Egypt or abroad.

The increase in the number of Azharite religious institutes after the 1970s, as well as the opportunity for students graduating from the "modern" public system to study in secondary institutes, put a strain on the university of al-Azhar in the 1980s, forcing the institution to accept too many students who are not educated in religious matters and do not have grades good enough to attend a secular university. According to many 'ulama, this numerical expansion has put into question the religious nature of al-Azhar and led to the devaluation of the level of studies in the faculties. Rare are the students who, when entering al-Azhar at the university level, know the entire text of the Qur'an by heart.

If al-Azhar is central in the domain of religious education symbolically and numerically, it is not the only place where Islamic knowledge is transmitted. There are other structures of transmission of religious knowledge for children: private religious schools that can also take the name of kuttabs. They belong to a parallel or private religious sector. They can be affiliated with mosques, Sufi *zawiyas*, or larger Islamic organizations, which not only provide religious education, but also medical and economic services or even political ideologies. They may cater to children, provide literacy skills to adults or provide evening lessons to women. Since this type of education generally does not rely on state support, it is more informal and much more fragmented than the Azharite system. These informal networks of transmission of religious knowledge generally are not "schools" with a high doctrinal content. Their aim is the popularization of religious knowledge, and the transmission of devotional rules and discipline. But the distinction between the two systems is very often blurred, because al-Azhar covers much more than simply the official and institutional space represented by the state administrated schools. As *the* central system providing religious education, it matches up with the informal sector of religious education, and even supports it through 'ulama who belong to al-Azhar (or at least have some form of access to it) and manage or teach in those informal spheres of education.

Religious education is also present in departments of modern public universities, which both compete with al-Azhar and also complement it, since intellectual collaborations and political alliances between Azharites and scholars of religion in modern departments—who may be Azharite alumni—often develop. The Dar al-'Ulum, founded in 1872 to train teachers and educate Azharites in modern subjects, was eventually considered too conservative by reformers and to have failed to "remold" the "Azharî mentality and outlook" (Heyworth-Dunne 1939, 379). This school, from which Hasan al-Banna and later Sayyid Qutb graduated, was integrated in the 1940s into Cairo University. It offers today pro-

grams in Islamic studies at the undergraduate and graduate levels. While it is difficult to contrast these two institutions in terms of their approaches to Islam, it is possible to say that they are traversed by the same lines of distinction opposing critical hermeneutic interpretations to more literal perspectives on religious scriptures. The 1990s alliance between 'Abd al-Sabur Shahin, a professor at Dar al-'Ulum and alumnus of al-Azhar, and some 'ulama of al-Azhar against Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, a professor at the faculty of letters in Cairo University whom they accused of apostasy because of his hermeneutics of the Qur'an, shows that both institutions have comparable internal divisions that push them in conversation with each other (Zeghal 1996, 318–20). Abu Zayd's work looks at the Qur'an as embodying the particular ideological, cultural, and political features of seventh-century Arabia, notably the economic and political domination of the clan of Quraysh in Mecca. For Abu Zayd, once revealed, the Qur'anic text becomes inscribed in history, and is therefore readable with a critical eye. Anthropology, history, and linguistics can intervene in the interpretive process of the scholar (Abu Zayd 1992). But for his opponents, such a view desecrates the Qur'an by putting into question the divine and absolute truth of the revealed text. 'Abd al-Sabur Shahin rejected Abu Zayd's ideas not only for theological reasons, but also because his discourse threatened the raison d'être of the 'ulama as guardians of the revelation. It is remarkable that Shahin insisted, for instance, on the "socialist" nature of Abu Zayd's discourse, focusing on the politics of the debate (Zeghal 1996, 319). In continuity with older controversies, such as the one that led in the 1920s to the violent polemics between al-Azhar and Taha Husayn—who never hid his contempt for al-Azhar—over his work on pre-Islamic poetry, the Azharites participate actively in and beyond al-Azhar in the larger political and theological debates over the interpretation of the Qur'an.

The officials of al-Azhar usually view the continuity between al-Azhar and the informal sector of religious education as well as the other spaces of transmission of religious knowledge within the university system in a very positive light. This continuity enhances the influence of al-Azhar, whose 'ulama can participate in wide ideological debates, as long as it does not question what has become, since the 1980s, a very flexible partnership between al-Azhar and the Egyptian military state.

Religious Education Modernized: Continuities Between the Secular and the Religious

The history of al-Azhar in the modern period has relied on two important and intertwined assumptions. The first is a vision of al-Azhar as an institution represented by its official declarations and mainly as a homogeneous

political and religious actor. Failing to look at the sociology of the members belonging to an institution made of religious elites as well as ordinary 'ulama, teachers, and students, this representation misses the internal diversity and complexity of the institution on the social, economic, political, and ideological levels. The second defines al-Azhar's history through the lenses of modernization theory, assuming that a long process of social and intellectual "decline" took place at the end of the eighteenth-century, shifting the world of the 'ulama from their "golden age" to social and intellectual irrelevance. According to this historical perspective, the Egyptian religious scholars' legitimacy and social status were sapped by the modernization of education, law and the state throughout the nineteenth century. The 'ulama saw their sphere of influence progressively shrink while new schools were founded in order to produce elites capable of responding to the needs of a modernizing state; and they refused to modernize their own institutions of learning, retreating into a traditional world impermeable to innovation and external influences. It was in vain, then, when at the end of the nineteenth century the reformist Muhammad 'Abduh, himself a graduate of al-Azhar and appointed Mufti of Egypt by the British, attempted, against the majority of conservative 'ulama, to reform al-Azhar's curriculum by integrating modern subjects into it. This representation of a declining world of 'ulama draws its implicit hypothesis from the 1960s historiography of Islamic intellectual history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a history that provided a reading of this period in terms of Western impact and discontinuity (Hourani 1962; 1983). In the same vein, the historians' interest in the 'ulama of al-Azhar in the modern period dealt mainly with their ability—and mostly their lack thereof—to cope with modernization, defined as the import of Western ideas.

Also, on the level of the evolution of political thought, the attention given to new religious intellectuals finding their intellectual and formative roots outside of al-Azhar after the 1930s—mainly through the Muslim Brotherhood and in the 1970s with the Islamists—has led to the implication that al-Azhar could not innovate intellectually or at least that the intellectual, religious, and ideological productions stemming from that institution were lacking relevance. The recent and very visible ideological assertion of al-Azhar in the Egyptian public sphere puts these interpretations into question and has to be read in continuity with debates emerging in the last part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century, in which the 'ulama themselves took active part (Delanoue 1982). In the nineteenth century, individual Azharite 'ulama showed an interest in reformist agendas, an interest that did not translate itself at the institutional level but rather manifested itself through educational networks bridging modern and religious education as well as formal and informal

education (Delanoue 1982). Also, the creation of new schools in the nineteenth century relied on the kuttab's population. For instance, the Dar al-'Ulum and many of the new schools had Azharites as students. Hence many prominent Azharites—such as Rifa'a al-Tahtawi or Muhammad 'Abduh—were partly or totally integrated into the new educational system. This dialogue between the secular and the religious spheres of education, which started with the process of modernization of education in Egypt in the nineteenth century, provides the context for the more recent evolution of religious education in Egypt.

Gilbert Delanoue's seminal work on Egyptian 'ulama in the nineteenth century shows the "centrality of the Azharite system" at a time when secular education represented a very small percentage of the education received by Egyptians. Al-Azhar in Cairo effectively functioned as the center of a star-like shape, with which other important provincial madrasa-mosques had relations or could compete: the Ahmadi mosque in Tanta (where Muhammad 'Abduh had started his religious studies) or the Ibrahim Pasha mosque in Alexandria. Lesser provincial centers provided religious education, but not at the same level as al-Azhar (Heyworth-Dunne 1939, 15–40). The biographies of 'ulama whom Delanoue studied show that if their careers started in local village kuttabs and religious centers, they ended up at al-Azhar, which represented the apex of a religious career. Locally religious teaching could be given informally within a mosque, and it was not rare that a former child of the village and teacher at al-Azhar would stop by to teach in the local mosque. But this was not a formal or systematic teaching system. Religious knowledge was disseminated for the masses at the hands of the "semi-literati," such as Abduh's maternal uncle, Shaykh Darwish Khidr, who played an important role in the early career of his nephew (Rida 1931, 21–22). A merchant by profession, he was affiliated to a branch of the Shadhiliyya Sufi brotherhood, and knew the Qur'an by heart, as well as part of Malik's *Muwatta* (Delanoue 1982, 248, 560). The lesser centers in rural Egypt were often directly linked to devotional practices around mysticism and the practices of saints' cults. But it would be false to see here a radical opposition between a rural Sufi Islam and a more scripturalist urban culture represented by Cairo's al-Azhar. Actually, in the nineteenth century, the very basis of the Azharite culture, like the rest of the Muslim community in Egypt, was saturated with *tasawwuf*. The difference was not one of kind, but of the degree or level of knowledge. While al-Azhar was the place producing the great 'ulama, the provincial centers, zawiyas and kuttabs were the starting places for careers that might develop later in Cairo, sometimes abroad.

The Salafiyya trend would , however, influence a minority of the 'ulama from al-Azhar, as shown by the career and ideas of Muhammad 'Abduh. Later, Shaykh Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib (1886–1969), chief editor of the

Majallat al-Azhar in the 1950s, had an important impact, participating actively in the intellectual life of the 1930s through his journal *al-Fath* and mediating between the old and the new—and more politicized— Salafiyya under the influence of the ideas of Rashid Rida (Mayeur-Jaouen 2002). Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib was aware of the importance of the written media in the formation of a public opinion (*ra'y 'am*), and his journal was conceived as an activist and political medium in defense of Islam, against Christian missionaries and secularist ideas, at a moment when al-Azhar had started its own journal in 1929 (*al-Nur*, to become later the *Majallat al-Azhar*), and had adopted an apolitical stance. If al-Azhar, as an institution, preferred to remain publicly apolitical, some of its 'ulama used or built other channels to express themselves politically. Sufism itself was transformed by reformist critiques of zawiya practices, and a dichotomy began to clearly emerge between Sufis and Salafis, two trends remaining important today and defining differences in religious practices and textual interpretations. Vocal figures at al-Azhar, such as Muhammad Hasanayn Makhluf (1861–1936), affiliated with the Khalwatiyya brotherhood and himself an advocate of reforms at al-Azhar, redefined Sufism to demonstrate compatibility between Sufi practices and adherence to shari'a (Chih 2002). These examples show that many 'ulama had affinities with social and political currents and participated in the religious debates of the first half of the twentieth century.

To be sure, institutionally, al-Azhar became marginalized in Egyptian political life, but its 'ulama had, individually, a relevant role in many intellectual debates. Hence the opposition of conservative 'ulama against modernizing reforms is not to be related to their so-called apolitical or non-ideological state of mind, as Crecelius wrote in 1972, but to their resentment of the intervention and control of the state that accompanied those reforms (Crecelius 1972b). Also, in the educational realm, al-Azhar was being circumscribed to a stricter "religious" sphere and its 'ulama were, in the twentieth century, losing their centrality and their grip on many segments of a society that was secularizing: the 'ulama's function of education and juridical expression were progressively appropriated by secular state institutions. Introducing modern knowledge at al-Azhar was a way for the 'ulama to integrate the expanding modern educational sphere, but would certainly produce for them a loss of religious identity. The 'ulama were therefore faced with a dilemma: either regain centrality through structural reform, thereby losing their religious identity, or avoid change, but be sure to remain the custodians of Islam. Their desire to participate in and benefit from the changes affecting Egyptian society is illustrated by the fact that between the two world wars, 'ulama and students from al-Azhar, faced with the harsh competition of modern institutions of education, fought actively for their integration into the modern

sphere of knowledge: they wanted to have equal opportunities with other graduates in the job market of education (Costet-Tardieu 2002, 171).

Reassessing the Post Colonial State's Impact on Al-Azhar: From the Weakening to the Recentering of the 'Ulama

Historians have underlined the informal and nonfixed character of Islamic education prior to the modern period (Berkey 1992). The emergence of the modern state in Egypt has had radical consequences on this state of fluidity, without entirely compromising it, by progressively placing the Azharite institution at the center of the religious economy. In the early nineteenth century, the state-sponsored reforms of the Egyptian system of education first ignored the 'ulama's world by avoiding transforming it. Later, in the second half of the nineteenth century, state elites who tried to modernize al-Azhar were only able to transform the institution through the rationalization of its administration: degrees and formal examinations were introduced, reducing the informality and the flexibility of the system of transmission of religious knowledge which progressively became more institutionalized. The 'ulama were also weakened through the diminishing of their political and socioeconomic privileges. The Free Officers' regime transformed al-Azhar directly and deeply, in continuity with the process of institutionalization started earlier, but also reconfigured, against the will of the 'ulama, the very structure of the knowledge they transmitted. In the long term, this reform gave the Islamic university and its 'ulama the opportunity to regain their institutional centrality, without entirely losing the quality of fluidity in the transmission of knowledge and ideas.

Nasser and his aides had a strong program for the transformation of the religious sphere. Their action left an important mark on the structure of al-Azhar and on the 'ulama's psyche. In 1961, the Free Officers shifted the weight of the political reforms from the foundations of the 'ulama's influence to the institutional space they occupied. After having nationalized the religious endowments and unified the legal courts in the 1950s, the Nasserist state radically transformed the space of transmission of religious knowledge through the authoritarian imposition of the law of al-Azhar in 1961 (Zeghal 1996). This reform law recentered al-Azhar's function and religious authority around the political power of the Egyptian military state. Religious education therefore became institutionalized under the control of the state. The fact that the Nasser regime chose to transform, control, and enlarge the religious system of education instead of abolishing it like the Tunisian government did (Zeghal 1999b), indicates that the world of 'ulama and their function of transmission of reli-

gious knowledge were taken seriously by the regime: they could provide a political tribune, could represent a counter power to the Muslim Brothers if used properly, and provide Egypt, as the center of Arabism, with its Islamic legitimacy.

The 1961 reform had political and intellectual implications. First, it brought al-Azhar under the tight control of the state. The 'ulama belonging to al-Azhar became part of an administrative body that was under the direction of the Grand Imam, also called the Shaykh al-Azhar, himself appointed by the president of the Republic and given the rank and salary of a minister. Al-Azhar had always had tight relationships with the political power, but this connection was that of a partnership that could at times favor either the political power or the 'ulama. Over the nineteenth century, the Shaykh al-Azhar emerged as an important religious figure in the institution and became a central character in its structure (Crecelius 1972a). In 1961, he became the administrative head of al-Azhar, which was organized into five institutions (the high council headed by the Grand Imam, the University, the primary and secondary institutes, the culture and missions organization, and the Academy of Islamic Research). Al-Azhar as an institution became the religious tribune of the regime of Nasser and gave religious edicts or fatwas as the authoritarian state required them. At the head of the institution, official 'ulama served the political power's interests once those few who refused to submit to the demands of the regime resigned.

On the intellectual level, Nasser transformed the structure and content of the transmission of education. *Islah* (reform) was more often used to describe it than *tahdith* (modernization). This was when modern subjects were introduced in the Azharite institutes alongside the religious ones, increasing the work load of young students who had to master the learning of the Qur'an, Islamic history, hadith, and also mathematics, sciences, and geography. The famous description by Taha Husayn of the kuttab atmosphere in his autobiographical work *al-Ayyam*, as well as his contempt for Azharite religious education, the rote-learning and the obscurities of an education devoid of rationality illustrates, along with other literature critical of this religious education, the negative reputation of kuttabs' education for Egyptian reformers. Educational reforms in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had transformed those religious schools into government modern schools, but many of the kuttabs remained when the Free Officers took over. For Taha Husayn, minister of Education between 1950 and 1952, reforming al-Azhar meant abolishing those structures.

But the Nasser regime chose to avoid marginalizing religious education. The Free Officers' policy integrated the religious sphere into a "reforming" project: to control, transform, and instrumentalize the religious

sphere by retaining the old channels of religious education and reinstitutionalizing them under the ideology of modernization (tahdith) and reform (islah). Institutes were gradually replacing kuttabs: tables, chairs, blackboards, and textbooks were to supplant the old spatial organization of the mosque or the shaykh's home: cross-legged young students sitting on the floor and learning the Qur'an by heart under the threat of the shaykh's stick. The content of knowledge was also to be transformed: young Azharite students would familiarize themselves with secular as well as religious knowledge, hence reuniting *din* and *dunya*, two realms that, according to the regime, were never to be separate in Islam. The Nasserist project, through the description of this very dichotomy as opposing the "traditional religious" (the old al-Azhar) to the "modern religious" (the new al-Azhar), reinvigorated the Salafiyya reformist project while at the same time categorizing new legitimate versions of religious knowledge in shape as well as in content. At the level of higher education, modern faculties were established, where secular knowledge was to be taught: science, medicine, engineering, or pharmacy were defining the new curriculum, and the graduates of the institutes could choose to become professionals by studying in these modern faculties, which were to produce "complete" scholars versed at the same time in religious and secular knowledge, helping them realize their universal vocation. Their knowledge was to be at the same time part of din and dunya (religion and world). The preamble of the 1961 reform law of al-Azhar presented the reform as a project to reintegrate the 'ulama, who had become marginalized, into this world:

> Al-Azhar did not know how to find the way that would help it participate in the movement of renewal and make it agree with the age. . . . Its graduates are still today . . . men of religion (*rijal al-din*) who hardly look at the sciences of this world (dunya) in a useful way. Islam, in its original reality, does not make a distinction between the science of religion (din) and the science of this world (dunya). Islam is indeed a social religion. . . . Each Muslim has to be at the same time a man of religion and a man of the world. . . . Allah answers those who invoke Him. They do not need an intercessor or a mediator to get closer to him. (*Al-Hay'a al-'amma* 1986)

Not only were the 'ulama supposed to integrate themselves into the rapidly changing Egyptian society, but they also saw the boundaries between themselves and the laity dissolve, putting into question the very existence of a religious profession, that of the rijal al-din. While the law of 1961 was, through the imposition of state control, institutionalizing al-Azhar even more than before, it also, ironically, symbolically diluted the institutional location of 'ulama, echoing the negative description by Taha Husayn of al-Azhar as "a state within the state" (Husayn 1944, 26).

Paradoxically, the law of 1961 also stated that al-Azhar had to remain "the greatest Islamic university and the oldest in the Orient and the West," "a citadel of religion and Arabism" (Zeghal 1996, 122). Therefore the 1961 law shaped a highly ambiguous project that was aimed at reforming the world of the 'ulama and at the same time criticizing their isolation by putting into question the very legitimacy of their existence as a profession.

The Azharite 'ulama could not be exclusively the guardians of a supposedly homogeneous fixed tradition. They had to depart from a universe of religious unity and homogeneity. Hence, for many 'ulama, the reform of the Islamic university desecrated its very identity by profaning it and transforming its members into hybrid scholars. Different justifications were given to explain to the public and the 'ulama the modernization of the content of the knowledge transmitted. Vis-à-vis the larger public, state propaganda used a positivist perspective on religion, à la Auguste Comte: Egypt was modernizing, and the 'ulama, represented as entrenched in superstitions, folklore, and feudalism, had to come to grips with reason and modernity. Vis-à-vis the 'ulama, the reform was presented as a reassertion of the Islamic identity of Egypt and of the "true" nature of Islam as a "comprehensive" religion. The very usage of the phrase "religion and world," *din wa dunya*, by the preamble of the law of 1961, also a reference used by the Muslim Brothers, had great valence for the 'ulama, who had individual affinities with the Muslim Brothers and had often developed this theme in their magazine, the *Majallat al-Azhar*.

Notwithstanding the authoritarian imposition of the reform on the 'ulama, the ambiguities of the narratives surrounding the 1961 law illustrate the need for negotiations between the state and the 'ulama, even at the height of the authoritarian military regime's might. The tight political control imposed on al-Azhar also went hand in hand with the authoritarian refashioning of tradition and Azharite Islamic discourse, which had to legitimize "Islamic socialism" or the repression of the Muslim Brotherhood. The official 'ulama did so half-heartedly. But this obedience to the political power, far from being caused by a lack of ideological resources on the part of the 'ulama, was simply the result of a very narrow structure of opportunities and margin for action: the 'ulama followed a wait-and-see strategy, defending the religious institution in Egypt and abroad, with the resources and the political limits the regime had given them.

The Reemergence of Al-Azhar on the Political and the Intellectual Scenes

The political conflation between the official Azharite spokesmen and the Egyptian regime did not last long. Under Anwar Sadat's regime, the context changed radically: during the 1970s, a separation began to arise be-

tween the military regime and the head of al-Azhar, as the religious institution started to gain leverage while Islamist discourses developed in a more liberalized religious sphere and started to represent serious religious competition for al-Azhar. The 'ulama themselves started to manifest a diversity of positions in the political spectrum, and al-Azhar saw its ideological gamut enlarge publicly while the head and the official discourse of the religious institution stopped coinciding necessarily with that of the regime. The best illustrations of this diversity are the controversies that started appearing among Azharite 'ulama in the 1980s, in continuity with discussions that had emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, the terms of these debates having nonetheless shifted with time. While these controversies involved Azharites, they never were limited to them and involved many actors outside the institution. The Azharite Ahmad Subhi Mansur's writings against tasawwuf first put him at odds with the Azharite Sufis and brought him into an alliance with the Salafis. But later, when he expounded an interpretation of Islam devoid of any reference to the Sunna, relying solely on the Qur'an, he encountered the opposition of the Azharite Salafis influenced at least partly by Wahhabism (Zeghal 1996, 320). Both of these trends eventually allied together and had him expelled from al-Azhar. This case is an example of the internal intellectual and ideological divisions within al-Azhar and beyond, revealing at least two dichotomies: the first opposing Sufism and Salafism as the Salafis supported Mansur against Sufi Azharites, the second contrasting reformism and conservatism, as illustrated by the later alliance of Sufis and Salafis against Mansur's interpretation of a reformed Islam. The short career of Mansur at al-Azhar and his expulsion from al-Azhar in 1985 reveals the existence of a radical opposition between the Salafis and the Sufis within the institution. But it also illustrates that the consensus among those positions is not to tolerate what they may consider as extremism: Ahmad Subhi Mansur was considered by a vocal majority of 'ulama as a "radical" reformer putting into question the orthodox definition of sacred scriptures, and the state had therefore no reason to oppose his exclusion. On the other side of the spectrum, 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, the Azharite cleric who associated with radical Islamists, was also rejected by the Azharite system. Internal diversity is therefore limited by the religious institution once dissension between different positions becomes intolerable for the vocal majority, as in the case of Mansur, or when the state feels threatened, as in the case of 'Abd al-Rahman.

At the same time that it was experiencing this publicly visible process of ideological diversification, al-Azhar, in continuity with the years of Nasser, continued to expand as an educational institution, this time thanks to funding from the Egyptian state and from the Arab Gulf states in the 1970s and the 1980s. Al-Azhar enlarged geographically, increasing

the number of its institutes and faculties and responding to the high level of demand for education: schools were built in villages or small towns by families who asked the institution to take care of the school and to provide or sponsor the shaykh teaching there. Al-Azhar was therefore expanding through state as well as private initiatives, which to this day poses larger problems for its 'ulama in the definition of the identity of their institution.

The second level of expansion is ideological: a multilayered set of interpretations of tradition have always coexisted within al-Azhar, but after the 1970s they became progressively and publicly articulated with political debates. Head of al-Azhar from 1982 to 1996, Shaykh Gad al-Haqq demonstrated his differences with the political power by initiating wars of fatwas at the end of the 1980s with the Mufti of the Republic, Shaykh Tantawi, himself an Azharite, on subjects such as interest rates, demographic policies, or suicide attacks against Israel (Zeghal 1997). After having significantly disrupted the official religious discourse, the head of al-Azhar was immediately replaced, when he died in 1996, by Shaykh Tantawi, a more politically quietist scholar whose mission was to tame any resistance to the orders of the political power and to bring back dissenting 'ulama to the "center." But the transnationalization of religious debates would offer more opportunities for Azharite internal differences and provide an even larger ground for religious competition.

The Recentering of Al-Azhar in Transnational Debates: The Headscarf Controversy in France

In a world where religion has become globalized, the very notion of religious authority in the Muslim world has been deeply transformed, enhancing the fragmentation already at play since the 1970s saw new religious entrepreneurs inhabit the religious sphere and compete with state-controlled religious institutions (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). This new religious competition, far from weakening al-Azhar, has recentered its relevance, especially through processes of transnational circulation of ideas mobilized by the 'ulama. In effect, a religious institution such as al-Azhar has become one religious authority among many others available today, but it has the advantage of being sustained by a national state, on the one hand and, on the other, of being internally diverse enough to be perceived as a legitimate authority by multiple publics.

In Muslim societies, be they minorities or majorities, the rapid and wide circulation of religious ideas has redefined the way legitimate bearers of religious knowledge are recognized by their publics (Gaborieau and Zeghal 2004). The absence of a doctrinal definition of a clergy in the Islamic sacred scriptures makes the very definition of any religious author-

ity a political stake open to intense competition. This is why it becomes crucial for the political power to define and delineate the identity of religious authorities who can compete with the state on religious grounds. Democratic regimes as well as authoritarian states have recently shown their need to define for themselves an acceptable and legitimate interlocutor in religious matters. The 2003 French headscarf debate shows that the French and Egyptian states converged in defining a proper understanding of legitimate religious authority. During this particular event, the Shaykh of al-Azhar became a recognized religious authority according to the French political authorities but was instantly denied this role by many other religious groups located in France and Egypt, as well as outside these two countries, who contradicted him. The debate turned global, even finding dramatic echoes in war-ridden Iraq, when two French journalists were kidnapped there and the kidnappers demanded that the law banning hijab in public schools be cancelled.

The question of the presence of the Islamic headscarf in French public schools, which had started to become a public controversy in 1989, emerged again in May 2003, just after the French Council of Islam (CFCM or Conseil Français du Culte Musulman) was elected by Muslims in France in April 2003. The process leading to the creation of this new institution had been initiated over ten years earlier by the French state authorities who needed to regulate Islamic practices and negotiate with legitimate religious authorities whom the government could never locate, or when located, were too "radical" for its purposes. Whereas Nicolas Sarkozy, the French Minister of the Interior and himself the administrator responsible for negotiating with the Council, had suggested that the Council could intervene in matters such as the wearing of headscarves in public schools, on December 30, 2003, he visited Shaykh Tantawi, the Shaykh of al-Azhar, asking for the Grand Imam's legal advice regarding the question of hijab and circumventing the very religious institution he had brought to life on French soil. Sarkozy's aim was to obtain an authorization from what he perceived to be the most recognized religious authority by Sunni Muslims everywhere, particularly those in France. Also circumventing religious authorities from the countries of North Africa with which French Muslims have often retained relations, he gave preference to al-Azhar and its highest representative. The Grand Imam, who had to satisfy the Egyptian regime, produced a fatwa employing the usual ambiguities used by al-Azhar in order to satisfy a multiplicity of publics: in this case French and Egyptian authorities as well as the Muslim public in France and elsewhere. The fatwa produced by Shaykh Tantawi resembled an exemption to French Muslim girls from wearing hijab in the space of public schools and was taken as such by most actors in this controversy: "If a Muslim woman resides out of a Muslim country (such as France,

for instance) and if the French officials decide to adopt laws against the wearing of the headscarf, this is their most absolute right . . . , and as a Muslim, I cannot go against it. For this country's officials are not Muslims. In this precise context, when a Muslim woman conforms to the laws of a non-Muslim country, her status is, from the legal Islamic perspective, that of a coerced person" (*al-Sharq al-Awsat* 2003). And, the Grand Imam continues, the wearing of hijab is an "Islamic duty," but "a sin made under constraint can only be forgiven by God."

While the central message of the fatwa was that French schoolgirls had to obey French laws even if the hijab is a religious obligation, which satisfied the French authorities, the implied meaning was that French Muslim women were residents of France and not French citizens, and that the French laws were putting them at odds with their religious faith. Disconnecting France and "true Islam," residency on a territory and citizenship, and representing French Muslim women as victims of French laws, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar subtly agreed with the European Council of Fatwa and Research (ECFR) as with the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France, the French Muslim organization having at that time the most important political weight within the CFCM. The recognition of al-Azhar by French officials as a central religious authority for Muslims actually became one of the many factors at work in a more general process of fragmentation of religious authority, at the Egyptian as well as the transnational level. Tantawi himself described his fatwa as nonbinding: "Fatwas issued by al-Azhar are not binding. Individuals are free to accept them or not. It is the right of Muslims in France who object to the law to bring it up to the legislative and judicial authorities. If the judiciary decides in favor of the government because the country is secular, they would be considered to be Muslim individuals acting under compelling circumstances" (*Al-Sharq al-Awsat* 2004). While the Grand Imam was attempting to minimize *a posteriori* the impact of his contentious fatwa by defining a pluralistic field where the public had the right to accept or reject the religious authority represented by al-Azhar, he also implied that this field was much larger than the Egyptian territory. But in Egypt, the declarations of Tantawi revealed explicit differences within the institution of al-Azhar, where voices emerged in the public space to put into question the very religious authority of Tantawi himself, and to reassess the institutional authority of al-Azhar. This contestation, a highly politicized process of competition for centrality in the transnational and national networks of religious authority, grew out of many different scholars and politicians, but I will turn now to a particular type of scholars: the "peripheral" 'ulama who competed to regain centrality in terms of religious authority, after the episode around Islamic headscarves in France designated—at least temporarily—the head of al-Azhar as the central religious authority.

I have coined the term "peripheral 'ulama" to describe a new genre of religious authority produced by al-Azhar and defining itself in relationship to this religious institution (Zeghal 1996). Peripheral Azharite 'ulama are graduates from al-Azhar who may still belong to the institution and can retain some relationship with it, but who also show an important distance vis-à-vis the official head and doctrinal positions produced by al-Azhar in its partnership with the Egyptian state. They become visible when they publicly take positions that are dissonant with those of the Grand Imam. While during the 1960s peripheral 'ulama did not publicly emerge because they could not publicly disavow the political regime or the head of al-Azhar without risking political repression, the last three decades of the twentieth century saw two centrifugal processes at play that were the consequences of a new religious policy on the part of Sadat's regime (Zeghal 1996): on the one hand, the head of al-Azhar expressed himself in opposition to the regime and, on the other hand, discordant voices manifested themselves within al-Azhar. The Azharite religious institution demonstrated its ability to speak publicly not as a single homogeneous body but, on the contrary, as a polyphonic ensemble of religious voices. Far from illustrating a lack of coherence, it showed the plurality of perspectives within a large set of religious scholars, even among those who were state-appointed in official religious institutions. This multiplicity of public religious voices fragmented the official religious apparatus while the latter retained its institutional nature and its partnership with the military political power.

In the controversy on hijab, the Mufti of Egypt, Ali Gum'a, did not entirely contradict his colleague's fatwa, underlining that the edict had made it clear that hijab was a religious obligation. But he forcefully criticized the French ban on hijab in public schools, "a blatant interference in Muslim rituals and doctrine" (*Al-Ahram Weekly* 2004). Also, within al-Azhar, through the Academy of Islamic Research (*Majma' al-buhuth al-islamiyya*), Azharite 'ulama such as Abessabur Marzuq declared that the fatwa was published in the personal name of Tantawi and not that of the 'ulama of al-Azhar (*Al-Sharq al-Awsat* 2003). Tantawi had also not consulted the Academy, according to Marzuq (*Al-Ahram Weekly* 2004). The Academy, which had become since the 1970s a discordant voice within al-Azhar, often allying with political Islamism and censoring cultural production it deemed contradictory to the faith, is the location of many peripheral Azharite 'ulama. On January 2, 2004, crowds rallied in front of al-Azhar mosque to protest the Grand Imam's fatwa and call for his resignation. The Muslim Brothers also criticized the fatwa, describing the head of al-Azhar as "a government official" who "compromises the principles of Islam for the sake of state policies." Hamdi Hassan, a Member of Parliament from the Muslim Brotherhood, sent a demand to the

Egyptian authorities to request the "appointment of a new Imam who will maintain al-Azhar's esteem, and regain its credibility." "The way Tantawi insisted on repeating that it is France's right to ban hijab in a confident voice to please Sarkozy was extremely shocking. Sarkozy sought a green light from Sunni Islam's foremost authority and ended up obtaining it" (*Al-Ahram Weekly* 2004). These Islamist critiques of the head of al-Azhar insisted on the fact that the fatwa was not the result of internal consultation, an undemocratic process that tarnished the reputation of al-Azhar. Remarkably, they agreed on the principle that the head of al-Azhar had the status of a central authority.

Shaykh Qaradawi was among the most vocal critics of Tantawi's fatwa. A few days before Sarkozy's visit to Cairo, the famous Azharite shaykh based in Qatar and head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research had sent a letter to French President Jacques Chirac, in which he criticized his "biased perception" of the headscarf and "misleading interpretation" of secularism, after Chirac had himself given a speech on French national television in favor of the ban on religious signs in public schools. Responding to Chirac's description of the veil as "a sort of aggression," the shaykh wrote: "Mr. President, we have felt resentful over your considering hijab as aggression on others. It is just worn out of commitment to religious principles, no more, no less. . . . Hijab is not an outer expression of identity (as you say), but it is imposed by Islam with a function to protect a woman by covering hair, neck, and upper part of her chest" (*Islamonline* 2003). While Tantawi had clearly excluded Muslims from French citizenship, Qaradawi, on the contrary, underlined the belonging of young French Muslim women to France by describing them as the children of President Chirac, "father of the French house": "the merciful father does not feel satisfied that some of his children are living in continued panic and disturbance" (*Islamonline* 2003). After the fatwa by Tantawi was published, the European Council produced its own, underlining its commonalities and differences with the official Azaharite fatwa, and most of all underscoring its own claims as a religious authority: "The ECFR, being the major religious reference for Muslims in Europe, has been surprised, as have the Muslims all over the world, by the tendency to prevent wearing the so-called religious symbols in France, which will affect first of all the right of Muslim women in France to wear the hijab in schools and public institutions." Criticizing the interpretation of French secularism that led to the hijab ban, as well its contravening of human rights, the declaration of ECFR directly references Tantawi's fatwa: "wearing the hijab is a matter of worship and religious obligation, and not just a religious and political symbol. . . . His Excellency the Shaykh of the mosque of al-Azhar . . . clearly declared that the Islamic hijab is a religious obligation and not a 'religious symbol.' As to the saying attrib-

uted to him that France as a sovereign state has the right to enact the laws and legislations it deems suitable, it is valid and acceptable internationally. But we think that it would have been beneficial also . . . to add that such right should comply with the conventions of human rights, international treaties, and the UN convention and that it cannot be imagined that the sovereignty of a state justifies enacting laws that oppose human rights and religious freedoms. Such clarification could have prevented misinterpreting his stance that some understood as giving up his duty of supporting his Muslim brothers and others in claiming their legal rights and doing their religious duty" (ECFB, 2003). Indeed the only difference between the head of al-Azhar and the European Council was that for Tantawi, resistance, even that of the pacific and legal variety, was not necessary, while it was vital for the Council to underline the possibility of criticizing the French political power with all legal means. While Tantawi did everything to show his neutrality vis-à-vis the ban by a non-Muslim state, others, within and outside of al-Azhar took, in the name of the defense of human rights, a less neutral position vis-à-vis the French state.

In this controversy, sparked by a local event taking place in France, the Azharite institution participates in transnational debates, at the initiative of a foreign state, which recognizes al-Azhar as a relevant and central Islamic religious authority. Tantawi is therefore integrating al-Azhar into partnerships with multiple states (Egypt as well as France), while regaining agency by expressing what he wants to say and discuss within the language authorized by the Egyptian political regime, his most important partner. His message is that wearing the veil is a religious duty, but that non-Muslim states are sovereign and the dichotomy between Islam and non-Islam is the most relevant category to understand how Muslims should behave in those two spaces that define the world they inhabit. At the same time, though to a lesser degree of importance, al-Azhar continues to produce its discourses for the umma; in doing so, it seeks to maintain a transnational influence that has long been its mission but was, again, institutionalized under Nasser, when al-Azhar's teachings and missions became vehicles of "Islamic socialism" in Africa and the Third World.

Qaradawi, on the contrary, does not define his religious discourse as anchored in a nation-state. His message is first and foremost for Muslims wherever they are. His public is made of "Muslim citizens" (not necessarily French or Egyptian). Islam and citizenship linked to national territory are not contradictory for Qaradawi. For Tantawi, they can be. Qaradawi's authority is built not only on individual charisma but also on a carefully devised relationship to a set of institutions: his Azharite career gives him legitimacy and he has certainly emphasized this part of his education on his Web site. He also uses extremely well the new television networks in the Middle East as well as the Internet. His presiding of the

transnational structure of the ECFR offers him stature, resources, and authority. Tantawi, for his part, is definitely anchored in a state institution that caters first and foremost to the Egyptian state and society. Therefore, when citizenship coerces religion and redefines it, the Grand Imam Tantawi sees this redesigning of Islam as legitimate and acceptable. For the Shaykh al-Azhar, states are and can act above religion. While he intentionally describes here non-Muslim states, it is clear that his statement describing "coerced Islam" is also applicable to the case of Egypt, where 'ulama remain under the control of the state. Qaradawi, an Azharite established far away from al-Azhar and his native Egypt, states, on the contrary, that the French Republic's citizenship can and should be remodeled by accepting visible religious practices. In this case, religion is entirely part of citizenship—itself recognized by Qaradawi and formulated in the language of "human rights and religious freedoms." What Qaradawi proposes is not a juridical contradiction of Tantawi's fatwa, but a reformulation of what citizenship should be, on grounds that are not defined religiously but politically. This dichotomy between the official representative of a national religious institution and a peripheral 'alim is very much exemplary of the tensions, exchanges, and—somewhat distant—conversations between nationally defined religious institutions and the transnational authorities which have recently emerged in the Muslim world.

The headscarf controversy is not the only example of the expansion of al-Azhar's discourses and publics. The current war in Iraq has also produced important controversies between peripheral 'ulama and the official head of al-Azhar, provoking a visit from the U.S. ambassador to the Shaykh al-Azhar (Zeghal 2006). While today this influence has expanded and competes with peripheral 'ulama for centrality, al-Azhar has preserved its institutional identity and place, in a territory that is highly disputed but that can expand depending on events taking place anywhere. The fact that its territory is now inhabited by others (Islamists and peripheral 'ulama) enhances its national and transnational centrality rather than weakening it.

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Interview in Cairo with a professor at al-Azhar, faculty of Arabic language, May 4, 1992.
Interview with a professor at the al-Azhar faculty of theology, Cairo, February 7, 1993.
Interview with a graduate of al-Azhar, Cairo, May 13, 1992.

Notes

1. These figures do not take into account the 88 *ma'ahid namudhajiyya*, which use modern pedagogy, and educate 15,250 boys and girls.
2. Interview in Cairo with a professor at al-Azhar, faculty of Arabic language, May 4, 1992.
3. Interview with a professor at the al-Azhar faculty of theology, Cairo, February 7, 1993.
4. Interview with a graduate of al-Azhar, Cairo, May 13, 1992.

CHAPTER 6

Madrasas in Morocco: Their Vanishing Public Role

Dale F. Eickelman

The core meaning of madrasa in Arabic, "place of study," has powerful popular connotations in Morocco. As elsewhere in the Muslim majority world, madrasas have played an important cultural and institutional role in the Moroccan religious, political, and social imagination. Historically and in different contexts, a madrasa in Morocco is a place where the young first learn to memorize and recite the Qur'an. Moroccans also know such places as *msid*s (a colloquial contraction of *masjid*, "mosque") and as kuttabs. The term equally signifies places of advanced religious learning, transmitting, and interpreting the word of God since the early Islamic centuries. They have produced religious leaders capable of playing major roles in sustaining—and constraining—the authority and legitimacy of rulers. In Morocco, the two historically distinguished mosque-universities have been the Qarawiyin in Fez and the Yusufiya in Marrakesh. Until the 1930s, all madrasas in Morocco were funded entirely by private charitable endowments. The larger endowments were then taken over by the Protectorate government, although many local smaller madrasas continued to be privately funded.

Until recent decades in Morocco, the presence of a madrasa for teaching the elementary forms of Qur'anic recitation was an essential feature for defining a rural community or urban quarter. No matter how economically pressed communities were, they would recruit and pay the salary for a rural teacher (*fqih*) who also performed vital community ritual functions associated with birth, circumcision, marriage, and death. Alongside these schools, at least through the 1930s, there were more advanced schools—sometimes in tents in rural regions—for learning more advanced Islamic texts and the Arabic needed to understand them.

The Precolonial Legacy

This chapter concerns madrasa education and the changing role that it has played in Moroccan society from the late nineteenth century to the present, both at the level of the modest msid or Qur'anic school found in

every town quarter and rural settlement until recent times and at the "high" end of mosque-universities.

Madrasa education in Morocco poses a paradox. The nineteenth century was a period of intellectual ferment for scholars and students at Morocco's mosque-universities. In spite of the growing involvement of European powers in Morocco from the 1830s onward and the steadily worsening financial situation of the Moroccan state, madrasa education thrived and was alive with attempts at reform.

At the same time, those who knew madrasa education best have been its fierce critics. Writing with a first-hand knowledge of the Qarawiyin of eighty years ago, a distinguished French historian and Arabist noted the "astonishing" (presumably to a European) domestication of the memory involved in madrasa education. He claimed that it deadened the student's sense of inquiry to the point that the knowledge and comportment of twentieth-century men of learning could be assumed "without fear of anachronism" to be exact replicas of four centuries earlier (Lévi-Provençal 1922, 11). Another Western scholar wrote of the "stifling dullness" of Islamic education (Brown 1972, 71) and a third, perhaps indicating impatience with the mnemonic principles on which madrasa education is based, claims that it "defies all [*sic*] pedagogical technique" (Berque 1974, 167). Madrasa education fares no better in the hands of Western-educated Muslims, who write of it as a "purely mechanical, monotonous form of study" (Zerdoumi 1970, 196), a notion also widely spread by its image in Taha Hussein's *The Stream of Days* (1948), a memoir written after he acquired a French doctorate.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, mathematics, engineering, and astronomy were reintroduced as taught subjects at the Qarawiyin. Men of learning, 'ulama, associated with the government were in the vanguard of the reform movement, the goal of which was a rededication to the values that made the Islamic community (umma) great in the past. Through personal and collective effort (ijtihad) and a renewed discipline of self and society through education and control (*nizam*), the 'ulama considered that Islamic society would become revitalized and offset the European challenge, at the same time accepting useful contemporary innovations (Binsa'id 1983, 28–33). To achieve this goal, some religious scholars were sent on foreign missions to pursue studies, including military science, in Egypt and in Europe (al-Manuni 1973, 96–103, 114–25). The introduction of a lithograph printing press in Fez in 1865 accelerated the diffusion of knowledge (Ayache 1979, 147; al-Manuni 1973, 203–12).

Sultan Mawlay Hasan I (r. 1873–1894), for example, strongly encouraged scholars imbued with modernist, reform-minded ideologies derived from studies in the Arab East, primarily Cairo and Mecca. He took a personal interest in the debates of the men of learning and encouraged

madrasa education (Jirari 1976, 17–8). His concern for higher religious studies was integrally linked to his efforts to strengthen and expand the Makhzan (literally storehouse or coffer), the name by which Morocco's government continues to be known. Until the 1940s, when graduates of the colonial schools became available in sufficient numbers, these efforts necessarily involved recruiting madrasa graduates for administrative posts.

Until 1925, the convergence of popular and royal support for madrasa learning was exemplified in the annual feasts for religious students held at the Qarawiyin and at the Yusufiya. Students at both institutions selected a "mock" sultan among their numbers and other students formed his entourage. These feasts culminated in a public parody of Makhzan ceremonial, including ribald parodies of the Friday sermons (*khutbas*). Often the real sultan attended the spectacle in person. At its conclusion, the student sultan had the right to ask a favor of the real sultan, sometimes including the pardon of a prisoner.

Public recognition of the special role played by madrasa students—no other category of Moroccans were accorded equivalent license—continued after the advent of colonial rule. At least once, in 1915, Marshal Hubert Lyautey, Morocco's first Resident-General (1912–24), personally attended the Feast of Students in Fez (Bidwell 1973, 19). Colonial authorities were acutely sensitive to the political overtones of the feast and finally sought to curtail it in 1925 (Cénival 1925, 139). Nonetheless it continued on a reduced scale until the early 1960s.

Until the 1930s, Morocco's two mosque-universities continued to attract the sons of the country's intellectual and political elite. In spite of the effective collapse of Islamic higher education in the 1930s, beginning around the time of the end of effective resistance to colonial rule, the style of learning exemplified by madrasa students continued to be the most popularly respected form of knowledge, shaping the language of politics and political action. Leading graduates played a significant role in legitimizing Morocco's precolonial sultans and also played significant, if not always willing, political roles as spokesmen for their community in times of conflict between royal authority and subjects (Dennerlein 2001). The justification for doing so was always their interpretation of Islamic law (shari'a) and practice, since the shari'a in principle constrained both ruler and subject alike.

Even before the 1930s, reform-minded madrasa graduates played a similar role with colonial authorities, making the Qarawiyin stand out as a hotbed of resistance to various objectionable French-inspired actions. In seeking to limit the influence of the Qarawiyin in 1931 and the Yusufiya in 1939, the French cleverly used some of the same language as the reformers of the nineteenth century, seeking to bring "order" (nizam) to its curriculum and to regulate who was to teach. One consequence of the French

intervention was the rapid flight of most town-based students from prominent families, leaving the major centers of learning almost entirely to ill-prepared rural counterparts.

Despite the decline of mosque-university education, the social networks of influence and patronage formed in part by its graduates remained relatively intact through the early 1970s because of the continued administrative, political and economic hegemony of its graduates of an earlier era. Their continued public role was due in part to the social networks that they controlled (Leveau 1976, 93, 116), but also to their identification with the dominant forms of valued religious knowledge.

Islamic Knowledge and Madrasas in Morocco

Why did children memorize the Qur'an? The cultural idea of religious knowledge in Morocco as elsewhere has remained remarkably constant throughout the regions of Islamic influence. Writing specifically of medieval Islamic civilization, Marshall Hodgson noted that education was "commonly conceived as the teaching of fixed and memorizable statements and formulas which could be learned *without any process of thinking as such*" (1974, 2:438; emphasis added). The italicized phrase raises the issue of what is meant by the "understanding" associated with such a concept of knowledge. The "static and finite sum of statements" (ibid.) conveyed by madrasa education popularly constitutes the religious sciences, the totality of knowledge and technique necessary in principle for a Muslim to lead the fullest possible religious life. The paradigm of all such knowledge is the Qur'an, considered literally to be the word of God. In Morocco its accurate memorization in one or more of the seven conventional recitational forms was the first step in mastering the religious sciences. The memorization of key texts, just as the Qur'an was memorized, has until recently been the starting point for the mastery of the religious sciences.

Historians and sociologists have tended to take at face value the ideological claim of the fixed nature of religious knowledge. Consequently, little attention has been given to how such a system of knowledge is affected by its mode of transmission and its linkages to other aspects of society. Normatively speaking, the emphasis in transmitting religious knowledge is conservational, especially in Morocco. Even Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) noted that the role of memory was stressed more in Morocco than elsewhere in the Islamic Middle East. It took sixteen years to acquire sufficient mastery of texts to teach on one's own in Morocco, owing to the necessity of memorization, but only five in Tunis (Ibn Khaldun 1967, 430-l).

Notable among the features of the Islamic knowledge embedded in Moroccan madrasa education is that an intellectual tradition emphasizing fixity and memory, as is characteristic of many traditions of religious knowledge, can still be capable of considerable flexibility. In practice there is considerable variation throughout the Islamic world as to the exact bodies of knowledge to be included in the religious sciences. Even during the classical period of Islamic civilization, learning took many forms (Eickelman 1985, 58). Much of this variety is related to ongoing efforts to redefine the proper scope and content of the religious sciences. In the premodern era as in the present, religious knowledge and its application to society was actively contested—consider the challenges faced by Muslim jurists interpreting the shari'a in the turbulent and uncertain final centuries of Muslim rule in Spain (Masud 1995; see also Zaman 2002).

The hyperbolic assertion that Islamic education deadens all sense of inquiry is hard to reconcile with such transformations. In Morocco, for example, grammar, rhetoric, jurisprudence, and, to a lesser extent, the prophetic tradition (hadith) were among the most central of the religious sciences until the early twentieth century, although subjects which began to be emphasized (or reemphasized) after the 1920s as components of a "new" orthodoxy included Qur'anic interpretation (tafsir), theology (kalam), and a knowledge of pre-lslamic and early Islamic poetry. If the compass of religious studies appeared unduly narrow, it is no more so than the products of the English public school in the Victorian era, with its emphasis on Greek and Latin, or the result of a classical training in France. Some former students of the Yusufiya and the Qarawiyin became scholars, but many others became politicians, ministers of state, merchants, and financiers capable of dealing with contemporary economic and entrepreneurial activities in rapidly shifting economic and political circumstances.

The cognitive style associated with madrasa learning remains closely tied to popular understandings of Islam in Morocco and has important analogies in nonreligious spheres of knowledge. This formal congruence has enhanced the popular legitimacy of religious knowledge and its carriers in Morocco, but at the same time, it has limited the pace and range of change in Islamic education and the ways in which changes are perceived. The notion of Islamic law encompasses both religious law in its juridical sense and law as a code for personal conduct. Most Moroccans do not possess exact knowledge of the shari'a but assume that religious knowledge is fixed and knowable and that men of learning know it.

Ma'rifa, the term used to refer to knowledge not encompassed by the religious sciences, includes knowledge related to commerce and crafts, including music and oral poetry. These have significant parallels in form with the religious sciences and are also presumed contained by fixed,

memorized truths. As Clifford Geertz (1983, 94–120) notes, popular oral poetry in North Africa takes this shape, just as effective public speech involves both the skillful invocation of Qur'anic phrases and the mundane but memorizable stock of knowledge drawn from poetry and proverbs.

A further parallel lies in how knowledge is transmitted. As elsewhere in the Muslim world, most people consider the religious sciences as conventionally transmitted through a quasi-genealogical chain of authority that descends from master or teacher (shaykh) to student (*talib*). Knowledge of crafts is passed from master to apprentice in an analogous fashion, with any knowledge or skill acquired independent of such a tradition regarded as suspect.

The measure of "understanding" appropriate to Islamic knowledge is its use, often creative, in wider social contexts than the milieu of learning itself or by the abstract manipulation of memorized materials in contemporary classroom situations.

The Social Paradigm of Understanding

Until eighty years ago, literacy in Morocco necessarily implied religious schooling, although madrasa schooling, especially in rural areas, did not necessarily imply literacy. The first years of study consisted of memorizing and reciting the Qur'an; only at later stages did students learn to read and write and then usually outside the context of the mosque school.

Contemporary literacy is difficult to measure, let alone the literacy rates of earlier periods, but estimates are essential to indicate the scale of traditional education. For the 1920s and 1930s, no more than 4 percent of the adult male rural population was literate, and perhaps 10–20 percent of the adult male urban population (for details, see Eickelman 1985, 60–1). As for advanced religious studies at the Qarawiyin in Fez or the Yusufiya in Marrakesh, there were roughly 1,200 mosque-university students in Morocco's two mosque-universities in 1931. The estimated total population for both the French and Spanish zones of influence was 5,800,000, so that mosque-university students constituted 0.02 percent of the population (Eickelman 1985, 85). Since most students left their studies after a few years to become merchants, village teachers, and notaries, only a limited number could claim to be men of learning.

Religious learning was popularly respected, yet Qur'anic schools were characterized by a high rate of attrition. Virtually every urban quarter and rural local community maintained a mosque school, as is still the case, with a teacher (fqih) contracted on an annual basis to teach and to perform certain other religious services for the community (Eickelman 1976, 97, 111–2). Most Moroccan males and a fair number of females,

at least in towns, attended madrasas long enough to commit to memory a few passages of the Qur'an, but the majority left before they acquired literacy, and few students remained the six to eight years required to memorize the entire Qur'an (Wagner and Lotfi 1980, 241).

A typical madrasa teacher through the 1940s had between fifteen and twenty students, ranging in age from four to sixteen. In towns today, up to half the students will be girls, although in the countryside female participation in msid education remains weak. No printed or manuscript copies of the Qur'an were used in the process of memorization, partly because of the lack of printed or manuscript books, but also because of the cultural concept of learning implicit in Islamic education. Each morning the fqih wrote the verses to be memorized on each student's wooden slate (*luh*). The student then spent the day memorizing the verses by reciting them out loud and reciting the verses learned the previous day. Memorization was incremental, with the recitation of new material added to that already learned (for example, a, then a,b, then a,b,c). Students were not grouped into "classes" based on age or progress in memorization.

In the past as today, madrasa education was associated with rigorous discipline and the lack of explicit explanation of memorized material. Both these features are congruent with the essentially fixed concept of knowledge that is at the base of madrasa education and, in the Moroccan context, the associated concept of "reason" (*'aql*), conceived as the ability to discipline human nature in accord with the arbitrary code of conduct laid down by God and epitomized by acts of communal obedience, such as the fast of Ramadan (see Eickelman 1976, 130–8). Firm discipline in the course of learning the Qur'an was thus regarded as an integral part of socialization.

When a father handed his son over to a fqih, he did so with the formulaic phrase that the child could be beaten. Such punishment was considered necessary for accurate Qur'anic recitation. Former students explained that the fqih (or the student's father, when he supervised the process of memorization) was regarded as the impersonal agency of punishment, which, like the unchanging word of God itself, was merely transmitted by him (e.g., al-Susi 1961, XIII, 35–6, 101, 168; Kane 1963, 3–38). Students were also told that the parts of their bodies struck in the process of Qur'anic memorization would not burn in hell. In practice, students were punished only when their attention flagged or when they repeated errors, although the children of high-status fathers appear to have been struck much less frequently than other children.

Former students emphasize that they asked no questions concerning the meaning of Qur'anic verses, even among themselves, and it did not occur to them to do so. Their sole activity was memorizing proper recitation. Because the grammar and vocabulary of the Qur'an are not immedi-

ately accessible to speakers of colloquial Arabic, and even less so to students from Berber-speaking regions, former students readily admitted that they did not comprehend what they were memorizing until fairly late in their studies. "Understanding" (*fahm*) was not measured by ability explicitly to "explain" particular verses, since explanation was considered a science to be acquired through years of study of the exegetical literature (tafsir). Any informal attempt to explain meaning was considered blasphemy and did not occur.

The measure of understanding instead consisted of the ability to use Qur'anic verses in appropriate contexts. In the first few years of madrasa, students had little control over what they recited. Firmer control was achieved as advanced students accompanied their father, other relatives, or, occasionally, the fqih to social gatherings, where they heard adults incorporate Qur'anic verses into particular contexts and gradually acquired the ability to do so themselves, as well as to recite specific sections of the Qur'an without regard to the order in which they had been memorized. Thus the measure of understanding was the ability to make practical reference to the memorized text, just as originality was shown in working Qur'anic references into conversation, sermons, and formal occasions. Knowledge and manipulation of secular oral poetry and proverbs in a parallel fashion is still a sign of good rhetorical style; the skill is not confined to religious learning (Geertz 1983, 112–3).

There was a high rate of attrition from madrasas. Education was free aside from small gifts to the fqih, yet most students were compelled to drop out after a short period to contribute to the support of their families or because they did not receive familial support for the arduous and imperfectly understood process of learning. In practice, memorization of the Qur'an was accomplished primarily by children from relatively prosperous households or by those whose fathers or guardians were already literate. Nonetheless education was a means to social mobility, especially for poor students who managed to progress through higher, post-Qur'anic education.

Madrasa education did not involve being systematically taught to read and write outside the context of the Qur'an, even for urban students from wealthy families. Students acquired such skills, if at all, apart from their studies in madrasas (Berque 1974, 167–8), just as they acquired an understanding of the Qur'an through social situations.

A madrasa student became a "memorizer" (*hafiz*) once he knew the entire Qur'an; this set him apart from ordinary society even without additional studies. In the precolonial era, fqihs and madrasa students often were the only strangers who could travel in safety through tribal regions without making prior arrangements for protection.

As professional outsiders with an intimate knowledge of the regions in which they taught and the freedom to circulate in tribal areas, older madrasa students and their teachers constituted informal networks among themselves through which information could be shared. In the years prior to Moroccan independence in 1956, the nationalist movement used these networks to advantage.

Madrasas as Higher Islamic Learning

In larger towns throughout Morocco, students wishing to pursue higher madrasa studies began by sitting with the circles of men of learning and their disciples who met regularly in the principal mosques. In rural areas, most advanced students continued their lessons at one of the numerous rural madrasas located throughout the country until the early decades of the twentieth century (Eickelman 1985, 68). In these years, the level of learning at rural madrasas and religious lodges (zawiyas) compared favorably with the education obtainable in major urban centers (Berque 1958, 12; Eickelman 1976, 39, 60, 222, 249; al-Susi 1961). Rural madrasas were an essential intermediate stage when Arabic was a student's second language.

In some regions madrasas were only clusters of tents; others were village mosques with adjoining lodgings for the shaykh and his students—who were supported by gifts of food from villagers and tribesmen. Most students attended madrasas (often several in succession) within their region of origin. The three to five years spent in this all-male environment, partially removed from families and communities of origin, was an intense socializing experience. There was no fixed progression of studies, although serious students advanced their knowledge of Arabic and memorized basic commentaries on grammar and jurisprudence.

The use of space in Morocco's two mosque-universities when lesson circles and lectures were still offered in them indicates their lack of sharp separation from the rest of society. Studies occurred in space shared with the wider community for worship and other gatherings. Lesson circles of teachers, students, and onlookers met regularly in the Yusufiya mosque, one of the largest and most central in Marrakesh, as well as in smaller mosques, and religious lodges, and the same was true for the Qarawiyin in Fez.

There was no sharply defined body of students or faculty, administration, entrance or course examinations, curriculum, or unified sources of funds. Former teachers related with amusement the efforts of French colonial officials to determine its "responsible" leaders and to treat it as a

corporate entity analogous to a medieval European university. Although teachers did not act as a formal collectivity, several older and respected shaykhs served as informal spokesmen for their colleagues on various occasions. Because of their recognition by the wider community, these individuals also controlled the distribution of gifts given by wealthy or powerful individuals to the community of learning. The ability of certain men of learning to control such distributions and to exercise influence on other occasions did much to consolidate their reputations.

Activities of higher learning were integrally related to and limited by the values and expectations of wider society in numerous ways. Teachers were not formally appointed, although some held royal decrees (*dahirs*) that provided them with recognition and specified emoluments.

As in any educational system with diffuse, implicit criteria for success and where essential skills were not fully embodied in formal learning, the existing elite was favored. Students from wealthy or influential families had initial advantages in securing useful ties, for they continued to be enmeshed in their families' networks of kinship, friendship, and patronage. Many of the reform-minded innovations in mosque-university learning took place away from the principal mosques and instead in venues such as shrines or private homes.

Reformist shaykhs sought to introduce new material into lesson circles and to draw students into questioning the relation of Islam to contemporary society (Merad 1971). Former students spoke enthusiastically of the reformist shaykhs as liberating (*harrar*) them from commentaries on a narrow range of subjects that had remained unchanged for three or four hundred years. Reformist teachings fit well within the prismatic nature of Islamic learning: lists of texts commented on from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century indicate variation in both subjects and texts (Eickelman 1985, 96–7).

The principal achievement of the reformers of the 1920s and 1930s was to introduce material into lesson circles that men of learning had privately acquired in the houses of the elite: Qur'anic exegesis, theology, history, geography, mathematics, classical poetry, and literature (adab). The reformers argued that these topics were as much a part of the religious sciences as subjects that had been previously taught in Morocco (al-Susi 1961, IX, 167–8).

Despite reformist efforts to instill a new critical approach to the religious sciences, however, knowledge had to be conveyed in classical Arabic, limiting its accessibility to the same select few who participated in traditional higher Islamic education. Reformists made some use of colloquial Arabic, an immensely popular innovation among younger Moroccans, but remained constrained by the popular expectation that "proper"

religious lessons had to be given in a formal Arabic even if only a restricted audience could follow its syntax and vocabulary.

Knowledge and Social Change

When alternatives to the mosque-university developed on a wide scale in the 1930s, madrasa education at the higher level quickly lost its vitality due to a conjunction of events. First was the French "organization" of Morocco's two principal mosque-universities, ostensibly undertaken to improve the standard of learning. These "reforms" came in the wake of major protests against French rule, in which the mosque-universities had played a role (al-Fassi 1954, 128–9, 133–5). Retained faculty members became salaried civil servants subject to governmental control and suffered a significant loss of popular prestige.

A second major factor was the increasing availability of government schools run by the French that siphoned off the children of Morocco's elite beginning in the 1930s. Madrasas became the least attractive option to Moroccan Muslims in colonial society. Moreover, significant numbers of Moroccan graduates from French schools began, by the 1930s, to fill posts in the colonial bureaucracy and to play key roles in colonial society. Study in a mosque-university ceased to be an effective means of social advancement.

The consequence was that the mosque-universities were left to the rural poor. At the Qarawiyin in 1924, 300 students were from Fez, whereas 419 were from outlying and predominantly rural regions (Marty 1924, 337). By 1938, only 100 students were from Fez, and 800 were of rural origin (Berque 1938, 197). Although exact figures are unavailable for Marrakesh, former students estimate that there were about 400 students at the Yusufiya in the early 1930s, of whom approximately 150 were from Marrakesh. The number of urban students had dropped to a handful by 1935, and almost none were from prominent families.

This collapse of higher madrasa education did not, however, have a direct impact on the paradigm of valued knowledge as fixed, memorizable, and necessary for making the word of God available for the guidance of the Islamic community. Major changes in educational systems take a long time to have a widespread impact. The concept of knowledge as fixed and memorizable truths is still demonstrated by Moroccans who have memorized the Qur'an and its proper recitation. The number of individuals who demonstrate such knowledge is rapidly diminishing. Yet later dominant forms of knowledge do not inexorably displace earlier ones. Many elements of madrasa education continue to have contemporary significance. In Morocco, for example, the models of peer learning in ma-

drasa education and in religious brotherhoods have been taken over by religious activists.

Morocco's Madrasa Tradition After Independence

The monarchy, for its part, recognized the popular legitimacy accorded to madrasa scholarship both at the mosque-universities and at the community level from the first year of independence in 1956. At a conference of officially-appointed 'ulama in 1981, Hasan II (r. 1961–99) urged his audience to concern themselves more with contemporary issues and vigorously to assert their influence within the limits prescribed by the state, both with the community at large and with younger Moroccans (Tozy 1984, 146). In a February 1984 speech, Hasan II (1984) further claimed that sixty senior Ministry of the Interior officials had been trained in both Islamic law and administration, and that the number of such officials with dual training would increase. By 1981, there also were fourteen regional councils of religious scholars to advise provincial administrators (Eickelman 1987, 91).

After independence, a division of the Ministry of Education was created to exercise control over Islamic schools, called "original" education (*ta'lim asli*). Following strikes by the remaining Qarawiyin students in 1956 and at intervals thereafter, the government formally stated that it would recognize religious education as an alternative to the secular state schools. By 1963, the Qarawiyin was formally recognized as a university. At least in a formal sense, the curriculum of the "reformed" Qarawiyin was supposed to be the same as that of its modern university counterparts although the study of Arabic and religious subjects assumed more importance. In spite of symbolic state support for higher religious education, in practice the system was starved for resources and prestige (Zeghal 2005, 64–9, 78). The prestige of higher religious education was not advanced by the claim in 1967 of the nationalist leader, Allal al-Fassi, himself a former Qarawiyin teacher, that all sciences were Islamic and that the Université Mohammed V was as much an Islamic university as the Qarawiyin (Zeghal 2005, 80).

Such measures at the "high" end of religious learning were complemented by action at early stages of madrasa education. Although higher madrasa education became increasingly marginal after the 1930s, community-based madrasas to teach children the rudiments of Qur'anic recitation continued to receive community support. In some parts of rural Morocco, wealthy Muslims sponsor small madrasas in which men of learning congregate to study religious texts and are fed and lodged at their patron's expense. Poor rural settlements continue to finance their own

msids. Many of these schools are inadequate, but their local support indicates the continuing public respect for Islamic learning.

Qur'anic schools for children received major state support in October 1968 when Hasan II announced a new role for the nation's kuttabs in preserving both Arabic and national values. He decreed that henceforth all students were obliged to spend at least two years in a Qur'anic school or in a preschool before entering the primary educational cycle. In addition to imparting basic religious values, Hasan announced that the madrasas would teach reading and writing, so that students would enter primary school already literate—and the monarchy's religious legitimacy strengthened. The initiative also brought temporary relief to the heavy demographic pressures placed on the national educational system (Zeghal 2005, 88). As a further indication of the importance that he placed on msid schooling, Hasan II ordered the Ministry of Education to replace the term "original" (*asli*) with "authentic" (*asil*) education (Vermeren 2003).

Since the teachers in these schools were the same ones who had been teaching in them all along and resources were insufficient to provide them with additional training, change in practice was uneven in scope and quality. At least in principle, new madrasas could be opened only with a permit from state authorities. Teachers had to pass special training courses, have lesson plans approved, and be subject to routine inspections of classes and premises.

The limits to these reforms became glaringly evident when, following the Iranian Revolution and the siege of the Great Mosque in Mecca in November 1979, Morocco, like many other countries in the Middle East, paid more attention to what took place in mosques and in madrasas. Following Hasan II's October 1968 speech decreeing that all Qur'anic schools would henceforth be supervised by the government, a cadre of 234 inspectors was created to supervise the estimated 30,000 schools. By 1980 there were an estimated 70,000 such schools, yet the size of the corps of inspectors remained the same size as in 1968 (Tozy 1984, 169). These numbers dramatically suggest the practical limitations to assuming strict state control of Qur'anic schools.

Morocco's Madrasa Legacy

Madrasas in Morocco continue to function as preschools although, at the more advanced level of mosque-university, the Qarawiyin for all practical purposes is a branch of the state university system. Some state-sponsored religious secondary schools also exist and, at the university level, most departments of philosophy had been closed and transformed into departments of Islamic studies by the late 1980s and early 1990s. The sole excep-

tion was the department of philosophy at Mohammad V University in Rabat, which continues to teach European philosophy, sociology, and anthropology. In large part this closure of departments of philosophy was due to a lack of student interest and preparation. Philosophy was taught in French. The Arabization of much of secondary and university studies that accelerated in the 1970s also had a major impact on the teaching of philosophy. Islamic studies were also perceived as a field in which examination results were more predictable than in other fields of study.

This shift of resources into Islamic studies appears to be the result both of poor top-down planning designed to satisfy perceived student "needs" and a low-cost way to accommodate political demands both for greater access to higher education and to satisfy the calls of some political parties to pay more attention to "Islam" in higher education. In practice, as admission to higher education has become less demanding, students least prepared to use foreign languages flock to Islamic studies. The Dar al-Hadith al-Hasaniyya in Rabat, intended to train advanced religious scholars, functions officially as part of the Qarawiyin University, itself part of the national university system. In practice, it offers a few sinecures for religious scholars but has no systematic way of placing its students in jobs in Morocco and is not coordinated either administratively nor at the collegial level with the departments of Islamic studies of the various state universities.

The advent of mass education in Morocco has displaced the principle of fixed and memorizable religious knowledge as the dominant cognitive style for valued knowledge. In practice madrasas have been transformed into preschools with religiously qualified teachers. At life-crisis events, such as memorial services, only religious specialists recited memorized texts in the past. Now it is common for everyone who can read to recite in unison with an open Qur'an or other religious texts such as poems praising the Prophet from books or photocopies passed out for the occasion. Valued religious knowledge now takes the form of cassettes, short pamphlets, or new media sources including (in urban regions) Internet sites that respond to "objective" questions such as "What is Islam?" "What difference should Islam make in my daily life?" and "How can I be a Muslim in the modern world?"

Mass education has made a major difference in religious sensibilities and ideas of knowledge. The timing of educational expansion varies throughout the Middle East, but major educational expansion in Morocco began after independence in 1956, accelerated in the 1960s, and today struggles to keep up with the rate of population growth. From 1957 to 1992, university enrollment grew from 1,819 to 230,000 students. Fifty times as many women are being educated today as in the early 1960s (Eickelman 1997, 22–3).

This massification of education has had significant influence on what is read. In Morocco in 1995, the best-read booklet circulating (in photocopy) among university students in Rabat and Casablanca was the anonymous "Interview with a Muslim Jinn" ("Mu'tamar sahafi ma'a jinn muslim"). The style of such pamphlets and short books is usually a breezy mix of literary and colloquial diction; the covers are eye-catching. At one level, such books and the style of popular religious figures indicate how religious and political beliefs are increasingly transformed into a conscious system. At the high end of the spectrum are the writings, speeches, interviews, and public presentations of Nadia Yassine (www.nadiayassine.net). Available in English, French, and Arabic from which Web users can download video clips, interviews, book extracts, and more, Nadia Yassine's Web site sets forth her views on what Islam means in today's world. When the mainstream Moroccan press interviews her on current events, the interview is quickly made available on her own Web site (for example, Chadi 2006; also at www.nadiayassine.net/fr/index.php?article=edito).

Such writings and other media presentations encourage and mirror the growing fragmentation of religious and political authority. An anonymous pamphlet that addresses the daily concerns and thoughts of students has a more immediate impact than a speech by a leading religious authority or writer. Similarly students involved in religious study groups will sometimes interrupt university lecturers in history, cautioning that what they say does not accord with what their shaykh says of religious history. The net gain is a tendency to think of religious belief and practice as a self-contained system offering a matrix of guidance to live life as a Muslim in today's world. The obverse side of this systematization is the fragmentation of religious and political authority in which students, like others, are free to seek guidance and form study groups that accord with their sense of political and social activity. Madrasa education became one of many ways of acquiring religious knowledge. In form and content it no longer offered a "product" as highly valued as the informal pamphlets, cassette tapes, and "study" circles that have emerged in concurrence. Thus Nadia Yassine's strong religious credentials are based on her ability to communicate and hold her own in the public media, especially with secularists. Her persuasiveness has nothing to do with the style or substance of madrasa education, an educational form at the margins of her audience of younger, educated Moroccans.

In word and in practice, Hasan II as late as 1968 could assert that kuttab education prior to entering the state primary system would contribute to national solidarity and shared values, with the monarchy dominating Morocco's religious space. The monarchy remains a major competitor for this religious space but it faces significant and increasingly vocal

challenges from other religious actors. Islam continues to play a large role in Morocco, but it is no longer the Islam of fixed and memorizable texts.

The monarchy is no longer the dominant religious voice in Morocco. Citing a Pew Global Attitudes Project survey released in July 2005, a Moroccan newsweekly reported that 75 percent of Moroccans believe that Islam plays a major role in their country's political life, and 70 percent identified themselves primarily as Muslims rather than Moroccans. Fully 83 percent of those surveyed responded that democracy could work in Morocco (Jamaï 2005; Pew Global Attitudes Project 2005). Of equal importance to the results of the Pew survey is the fact that such public opinion surveys have become commonplace and openly discussed in Morocco itself.

Major changes in ideas of valued knowledge and types of schooling occur incrementally and often are seen as insignificant at their inception. Only in retrospect are they recognized as sharp breaks with the past. Even when mass education has been used, as in Morocco, to sustain older patterns of belief and authority, its very structure engenders new "authoritative" ways of thinking about self, religion, and politics. In other parts of the Muslim world, the madrasa tradition has been sustained both at the entry level and as higher religious education. Twenty years ago, the UN-sponsored International Institute of Educational Planning in Paris explored the possibility of using enhanced versions of madrasa education to expand the base of primary education. Sudan and several other countries were identified as places where such an adaptation was possible, especially when examinations allowed the best and brightest to transfer into advanced state schools (Eickelman 1984). In Morocco, as in many other countries, however, the linking of state (and private) schooling to a higher status and better employment opportunities is relegating the practice of madrasa schooling to valued collective memory instead of contemporary practice.

Note

Portions of this chapter are a revised and updated version of Eickelman (1985).

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CHAPTER 7

Islam and Education in Secular Turkey: State Policies and the Emergence of the Fethullah Gülen Group

Bekim Agai

Talking about Turkey within the context of Islamic education presents a significant challenge, as the Turkish example shows how higher Islamic learning developed in one of the most secularized Muslim countries. Despite its unique relationship between state and Islam, which makes Turkey very different from its neighboring states, the country forms a microcosm with very different international Islamic trends within one country.

The closure of all medreses—the Turkish word for madrasas—in 1924 did by no means indicate the end of Islamic education in the country. Religious education in its various forms has never ceased to be provided, be it by the state or by private groups, each of which developed its own understanding of the content of Islamic education. This chapter seeks to create an overview of two very important religious players in the Turkish public sphere. On the one hand there is the secular state, promoting religious knowledge at different levels; on the other hand, there is the Islamic movement of Fethullah Gülen, which is strongly involved in private secular education. The chapter examines the complex reality of Islamic education in contemporary Turkey, and highlights the extent to which the situation in Turkey has been shaped by national developments, which, moreover, gave the impulse to transnational ones.

I begin by presenting an historical overview of the development of the relationship between Islam and the state in modern Turkey. I then examine the state's activities in the field of religious education. Finally, I examine Fethullah Gülen's new approach to Islamic education and provide an overview of how he and his followers understand Islamic education and how they put their ideals into practice.

Historical Background

The relationship of Islam and state in contemporary Turkey is a highly ambiguous one. On the one hand there are examples of Turkish veiled students studying in Europe or the United States, because they are not

allowed to wear their veil when studying in Turkey. On the other hand, the state is one of the main producers of religious discourse in Turkey, providing free areas of development for mosques to be built, paying the expenses for water and electricity, educating and paying preachers, and even standardizing the texts of Friday sermons. Until recently, non-Muslims were legally restricted in their religious freedoms.[1] This attitude of the state towards religion, especially towards Islam, can only be understood in a historical framework.

The Turkish Republic from 1923 to 1946

The Republic of Turkey was proclaimed in Ankara on October 29, 1923. Its first president was Mustafa Kemal, later named Atatürk. The proclamation of the Republic marked a revolutionary shift in the relationship between state and religion as well as the position of religion in the public sphere. Despite appeals to Islam during the struggle for independence (1919–23), the revolutionary modernizers of Turkey perceived the Muslim establishment as a barrier on the way to the modern nation state with its own elites, "holy"national symbols, and centralized power.

Religion in the early Republic was thus simply banned from the public sphere. Throughout all spheres, including family law, secular law replaced religious law. All aspects of education were taken away from religious authorities and put under control of the secular state. On March 3, 1924, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, successor of the Şeyhülislam institution, was created to take charge of all Islamic matters (Jäschke 1951, 33–55).

In 1924, 479 medreses and Qur'anic courses were closed as a result of the "Law for the Unification of Education," and compulsory schools following a national curriculum devoid of religious instruction were established (Kaplan 1999, 159). Only eight medreses remained open. Atatürk declared: "The medreses, established by the old Turks, are degenerated ruins, unable to be reformed in the light of a modern academic mentality." (Coskun 1996, 9)

Unlike other Islamic countries which conducted educational reforms within established institutions, such as al-Azhar as treated by Malika Zeghal (see Zeghal, this volume), the Turkish example illustrates a radical break, excluding the former religious scholars from society. This happened due to the fact that the struggle for modernization in the Ottoman Empire was partly based on the different socializations of the modernizers, who were graduates of Western-type military schools, and traditionalists, who had graduated from the medreses. The "Law of the Unification of Education," introducing the compulsory education of boys and girls, was intended to create a homogeneous generation of citizens sharing basic

assumptions on the nature of the state and trained in the sciences, considered the basis for modernization. Instead of further reform of the medreses, a process rooted in the policies of the late Ottoman Empire, they were simply closed. Centuries of traditional Islamic learning with its specific forms of transmitting knowledge suddenly ceased to exist.

The anticlerical Kemalist approach was logical in the context of the new nation-state's creation. Higher religious learning ceased in the early Republic and in schools religious instruction was no longer part of the curriculum. Between 1933 and 1948 there was thus no official access to higher religious studies in a country counting nearly 100 percent Muslim population (Özdalga 1999, 420–31).

With religion ousted at the educational and legal levels, further laws were introduced to reduce the public visibility of religion. Sufi lodges were banned and their places of religious gatherings, the *tekke*s, closed down while laws requiring Western-style clothing were passed. Between 1934 and 1947 it was prohibited to perform the hajj. The language was reformed and a national history created to strengthen "Turkish national identity," stressing the differences from the Arab neighbors with whom the inhabitants of Turkey had had centuries-old ties.[2] Evidently, Kemalism viewed Islam as potentially dangerous for the modern national state in this period.

The idea of the Republic as a civilizing project introducing new forms of civilization which could be enforced against the will of the people was not so much based on some form of "oriental despotism" as it was rooted in the "Jacobin" approach characterizing the Kemalist elites. The aim of the project was to modernize Turkey, give it a Western outlook, and make it compatible with modern, Western civilization, regardless of the difficulties this might cause for the populace. The early republican reforms that introduced, for example, the Western dress code, underline the focus on a highly visible secularization, Westernization, and modernization.

The notion that Islam had no place in Kemalism, however, is deceptive. Paradoxically, Islam played a significant role in the Kemalist understanding of the Turkish nation. Indeed, it was seen as a central element of Turkish national culture, for it was Islam which made a nation out of the multiethnic leftovers of the Ottoman Empire and turned Anatolians, Kurds, Caucasians, Albanians, Bosnians, Tartars, and many other ethnicities into "Turks." Islam, as the Christian confessions in the case of the Christian Balkan states, Russia, Armenia, and Georgia, served as the unspoken bond which created the nation.[3] This union of a laicist nation-state and religion remained a continuing source of tension. It is the key to any understanding of the difficult relationship between Islam and the Turkish state.

The Changing Role of Islam from 1946 to 1980

Two main factors led to a new approach towards religion, marking the end of an anticlerical and state-dominated reception of Islam in Turkey. First there was the growing realization among some segments of the ruling Kemalist elite that many years of repressive politics regarding Islam had not had the desired effect. On the contrary, due to the lack of any controlled form of religious education with its own standards of teaching, such as the former medreses, people were seeking their Islamic knowledge elsewhere. This led to the emergence of new authorities over which the state had no influence and whose training it could not control. The solution was seen in an enlightened form of "republican" Islam, propagated by the state itself through the creation of new institutions of Islamic teaching and learning.

A second influence on the state's approach to religion was the introduction of democracy in 1946. As much of the citizenry remained deeply religious, pressure for the fulfillment of religious demands grew after the introduction of democracy. Consequently the ruling Republican People's Party eased its religious policy from 1946 to 1950. Within the public sphere, religion became more visible in the following years and was gradually reintegrated into the state system of education. In 1948, it was decided to open a faculty of theology in Ankara. Training centers were established for *imam*s and *hatip*s, the prayer leaders and preachers, while courses teaching the reading of the Qur'an began to flourish and religious instruction became a voluntary subject in schools (Zürcher 1994, 215–28).

The notion of laicism had changed. Until today Turkish laicism means the control of religious expression through the state. By controlling religious tasks, the state hoped to depoliticize religion and integrate it into its "civilizing project." Though Turkish laicism is often said to derive from the French model, it differs from it considerably for, rather than being separated from the state, Islam is well-regulated by the state itself (White 2005, 87–9). In the following decades, there was a gradual increase in all forms of state-controlled Islamic education. A further important milestone in the history of the relationship between state and religion is the military coup of 1980.

Islam in Turkey from 1980 to the Present

The term Turkish-Islamic-Synthesis (TIS) has been used to identify an orientation towards a specific form of Islam by the Turkish military, which has been the laicist consciousness of the nation ever since overthrowing the government on September 12, 1980. This version of Islam emerged

in the 1970s amongst right-wing intellectuals and was utilized by the military regime to counter the ideologies of both leftist idealists as well as pro-Iranian Islamists. Propagated at all levels of society, this ideology was to establish a renewed sense of unity amongst Turkish society. The new constitution of 1982 consequently strengthened the role of Islam in Turkey. National historiography was revised and Islam was presented as an outstanding *national* trait of the Turks, as well as being a source of social and moral stability. The curriculum of state schools was adapted to religious demands, obligatory religious courses were introduced, and the theory of evolution was banned from schoolbooks (Cetinsaya 1999; Akyüz 1999, 307). This appears to be one of the reasons why important Islamic groups such as Fethullah Gülen gave their support to the coup d'état. The new state-promoted form of Islam became more visible than ever. In the latter half of the 1990s, the military felt overwhelmed by the effects of its policy. On February 28, 1997 they reacted with a memorandum, heavily criticizing Islamist tendencies within the educational system and revising its perception of Islam. But even today, there are varying levels of state involvement in the religious sphere, as we will observe.

The Laicist State and Its Islamic Component

Since the late 1940s, the state has returned to being more involved in religious education and established a limited number of free positions for private groups to engage themselves in private religious education under state supervision. The new understanding of the notion of laicism, reconfirmed after 1980, makes the state the most important religious player. It teaches religious instruction in schools and through Qur'anic courses, as outlined below. It furthermore controls higher religious learning and the teaching of theology in universities, creating what could be termed a "national understanding of Islam." This version of Islam is claimed to be scientific and is intended to be shared by all citizens, thus playing down the differences within the Muslim community.

The state shapes Islam on different levels. Today one key actor is the Directorate for Religious Affairs. With about 100,000 employees—from muftis to imams in the mosques, all state-paid—it controls the religious service in 70,000 mosques and shapes the religious discourse through standardized Friday sermons, fatwas, religious publications, and access to the state media. In the educational sector it is responsible for 4,322 Qur'anic courses throughout the country and provides a series of publications dealing with educational matters. The Directorate assumes the task of including Islam in the project of national homogenization as well as exercising state control over private forms of Islamic activities.

According to the constitution, it is the Directorate's duty to ensure national unity. The creation of a Sunni-state Islam is the paradoxical consequence of Turkish laicism. This duty even extends beyond the borders of Turkey itself, as it is an acknowledged part of Turkish foreign policy (Kara 2003): In Germany a branch of the directorate runs 740 mosques, while in Central Asia Islamic educational institutions form an essential part of Turkish foreign cultural policy. The Directorate has transnational significance, spreading the Turkish version of "true Islam." This extends as far as the teaching of Sunni Islam in a Turkish faculty of theology in Shiite Azerbaijan.

Islam in the Turkish Educational System

Vocational Schools for Imams and Hatips

With the exception of a brief period in the early Republic, these vocational schools have been in operation since the academic year 1949–50. Their purpose is to train people to perform the basic religious functions within the community. In 1951–52 there were seven junior (grades 6–8) and seven senior (grades 9–12) schools of this kind; in 1998–99 there were 604 of both kinds (Dinçer 1998, 57). As there has always been a strong fear of establishing some new form of medreses, teaching at these schools has been rooted in general concepts of secular pedagogy. For a long time more pupils were taught at these schools than could actually be employed in the destination professions. During the 1990s—and until the military intervention of 1997, which had dramatic effects on the schools—there was a significant increase in the number of students and, by the mid-1990s, about 10 percent of all students in Turkey were Imam-Hatip students. One reason for the success of this type of education was that since the 1970s senior schools had been recognized as regular, nonvocational high schools, giving the graduates the opportunity to study any subject at a university. Graduates of these schools usually achieved high marks in the central university entry exam, which tests a standardized spectrum of nonreligious knowledge. Ninety-three percent of the schools in question were supported by private initiatives which utilized the schools' religious appeal. Imam-Hatip schools usually had a far better teacher-pupil ratio than other public schools, as well as having the highest girls' proportion of all high schools (Özdalga 1999, 422–9; Çakır 2004).[4] Yet even though the schools have always been run by the Ministry of Education according to state guidelines, pupils and graduates of these schools have regularly been accused of being part of political Islam.

An educational reform, pushed by the military in 1997, closed down all types of junior high schools. From this point onwards, all pupils had to

attend general, nonvocational schools for eight years. The laws restricted access of Imam-Hatip school graduates to faculties other than the Faculty of Theology. Other measures were aimed at excluding graduates from sensitive parts of society such as police schools. This resulted in a drop in student numbers and the closure of many schools. Today only 2.5 percent of pupils choose to attend Imam-Hatip schools. This shows that the interest shown by pupils in earlier periods was not just focused on religious education, but lay in its combination with curricula that opened perspectives for further study in other fields. Such data show that pure religious education has a low level of attraction, unless it is also able to provide access to careers in the secular field of society.

Qur'anic Courses and Universities

The Directorate of Religious Affairs also controls the Qur'anic courses. These courses have a limited task, which is to teach the pupils to read the Qur'an in Arabic script and to recite it in the right manner. Traditionally Qur'an recitation is considered a form of worship in Islam. The number of Qur'an courses run by the Directorate increased from 61 in 1946 to 4890 in 1997—4,322 today. The large number of Imam-Hatip schools caused student numbers, which had been increasing steadily, to drop in the mid-1990s, as attendance at these schools made Qur'anic courses virtually superfluous. Consequently the number of new courses gradually decreased. A further cause of dropping student numbers and the decrease in Qur'anic courses in the mid-1990s was the influence of Fethullah Gülen and his vision of Islamic education, which provoked a gradual shift in the understanding of Islamic education and its content. Access to Qur'anic courses has also been affected by the military memorandum of 1997 and the resulting measures. The minimum age for admission has been raised and attendance is only possible during the vacations (Özdalga 1999, 429–33).

Islamic learning at university level is a field over which the state exercises a monopoly through the ministry of education. The subject is taught in the faculties of theology as part of the scientific discourse of the university, linked to other subjects like sociology and history. From 1924 to 1933 a faculty of theology existed in Istanbul, but it was closed in the course of contemporary radical secularist policies. The aforementioned change, which occurred within the Kemalist elite in the 1940s, demanded the creation of a modern version of Islam. This was to be taught in relation to other academic disciplines and was intended to be included in the national enlightenment project. This led to the establishment of a faculty of theology in Ankara in 1948. Even before the faculty was inaugurated, it was made clear that it would not be a form of medrese. Instead it was

to be included in the general educational system, as well as in scientific discourse according to the idea of the "Unification of Education." Until 1980 this vanguard institution remained unique in producing a modernist discourse with a distinctly scientific outlook hardly understood by the average believer. In 1959, Higher Islamic Institutes were established in order to educate staff for a more general religious education, such as the teachers at the Imam-Hatip schools. In 1982, these were transformed into Faculties of Theology as part of the post-1980 coup changes. Consequently, until recently, the number of faculties had increased to twenty-three. Graduates of the progressive Ankara faculty played a significant role in the establishment of the more recent faculties. Scientific discussions held in universities clearly show that the aim of including religious discourse in the general scientific discussion (e.g. the journal *Islamiyat* [www.islamiyatdergisi.com.tr]) has been realized. Important representatives of the faculties support a modernist understanding of Islam, sometimes barely understood by the ordinary believer. This is shown especially in their discourse on the necessity of the veil, as well as the historical-critical approach to Qur'anic text and the hadith they adopted. Graduates usually find employment in the educational sector, in different ministries and especially in the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Paçacı and Aktay 1999).

Religious Instruction in Schools

During the early Republican period, religious instruction was on all state schools' curricula. The subject was then gradually reduced until, by 1939, it had disappeared altogether. From 1948 on, it was reintroduced on a voluntary basis. In the 1970s, the subject "morals and ethics" became compulsory, while religious instruction remained optional. As part of the 1982 changes, this model was replaced by compulsory religious instruction according to the new state orientation (TIS). The combination of religion and general ethics in the subjects, "religious culture and moral instruction," answered religious demands in accordance with Kemalist discourse and attempted to reintroduce religion into the project of national homogenization. Such an approach had to ensure that all Turkish pupils learned the one and only "enlightened state-version of Islam" whilst undermining Islamic influences outside of state control and the potential creation of alternative forms of Islamic belongings. The Hanafi version of Islam, as taught in universities, became compulsory (Kaplan 2003). If Islam had always been the unspoken bond of the Turkish nation, it became an explicit and official part of national education after 1980 in order to level differences within the Sunni community. This completely denied the identities of Turkish Alevis, representing 20–30 percent of the

population, as their religious beliefs are not included in any form of official religious learning.

We have seen how strongly and comprehensively the state is involved in religious teaching, and how it causes traditional patterns of classical Islamic education to disappear. The followers of Fethullah Gülen are a specific result of these developments which have made Turkey a unique case in the Islamic world.

Alternative Religious Education: Fethullah Gülen

Though Turkey is often portrayed as very secular and laicist, different Islamic groups found ways to transmit their forms of Islamic knowledge in Turkey. The Islamic brotherhoods were outlawed, but some continued to operate in hidden forms. Some underground medreses were maintained, while Qur'anic courses were held in private. The most important development during the repressive period of the early Republic, however, was the formation of new forms of religious communities, the *cemaat*s. These groups attempted to maintain and transmit their Islamic ideas under the state's repressive policies. Cemaat can be defined as the combination of a specific discourse with certain forms of social relations. Unlike a Sufi brotherhood, the cemaat has no formal act to bestow membership. Indeed affiliation can only be gained through a transactional process of mutual acknowledgment of the personal commitment to the cemaat, its aims and hierarchies. The cemaats were critical of the state's religious education and developed their own forms of Islamic teaching. Some cemaats established private Qur'an courses, like the Süleymancıs, while others founded alternative networks to disseminate their specific forms of Islamic knowledge.

One of the most important cemaats was the Nurcu movement. Its founder, Said Nursi (1879–1960), recognized both the strength of the modern, secular nation-state and the leading role of technology in the modern world. He encouraged his students not to challenge the secular state, but to focus on the teaching and performing of Islam on an individual level as well as obtaining scientific knowledge. The cemaat provides religious education in reading-circles, the so-called medrese or *dershane*. In their medrese, very different from the medrese of Ottoman times, meaning is reconstructed through readings of Said Nursi's writings. This transforms the adherents into a form of "textual community." The Nurcu community thus has its very own religious discourse, its own hierarchies, and its special patterns of social relations, which create a unique form of network (Mardin 1989, 23–4; Agai 2006).

Both the content of teaching and the design of the Nurcu network have strongly influenced Fethullah Gülen, the founder of an Islamic educational movement which has set up a network of hundreds of educational institutions both in Turkey and in over fifty other countries. Motivated by Islamic principles, the followers offer modern, "nonreligious" education certified by the state. In most cases the primary language of instruction is English. The schools are the result of a specific understanding of Islam, shaped by the secular Turkish context and by ideas formed in conservative Islamic circles. Due to his involvement in interreligious activities, his positions on the reconcilability of Islam and democracy, and his public condemnation of violence in the name of Islam, Fethullah Gülen is by now well known to the Turkish public as well as abroad.

Networks, Ideas, and Discursive Strategies

Fethullah Gülen was born in 1938 in Erzurum, Eastern Turkey, a town of very strong religious traditions. Educated in an alternative system of religious education, the so-called hidden medreses, he had to gain recognition of his general schooling and religious knowledge in front of a commission. In the late 1950s, he worked as a state-paid preacher. In 1957, he was introduced to Nursi's writings and subsequently became an active member of the Nurcu network, teaching Islam according to their tradition (Erdoğan 1997, 33–78). The Nurcus had a pragmatic approach regarding the secular system and did what they could for the Islamic cause within the given social and political framework: In establishing their dershanes as places for regular students to stay, they created zones of religious socialization within the secular educational setting. The Nurcus, and with them Fethullah Gülen, welcomed the Qur'anic courses, Imam-Hatip schools, and Higher Islamic Institutes established by the state. They supported these with dormitories, where they could promote their own agenda of Islamic education.

Fethullah Gülen achieved a key position in the Nurcu network in the late 1960s, but he had further ambitions. His main fear at the time was that large numbers of young Turks were losing their attachment to Islam. Consequently he and other Nurcus used private houses to impart general knowledge of Islam to regular school pupils. In the late 1960s, Gülen established a subsidiary organization within the Nurcu network. This group gradually became more autonomous. Gülen aimed to create more efficient ways of transmitting religious knowledge to the masses. In the second half of the 1960s, Gülen supervised religious summer camps near Izmir, in which he taught a growing number of pupils the basic principles of Islam, as well as classical Islamic knowledge and the writings of Nursi.

Such camps are a good example of Gülen's attempts at solving the problems surrounding the religious instruction of school children (Erdoğan 1997, 117–24).

In the 1970s, Gülen established his own network in order to promote his vision of Islam in a way he found most suitable for the time and audience. He employed different means, such as large public sermons in front of thousands of listeners which were recorded and sold throughout the country. Gülen also held public lectures, dealing with questions related to the role of Islam in the modern world.

In his immediate environment, Gülen attracted people who supported his ideas with money and labor force. Specific community houses, the so-called houses of light, were built utilizing private flats or houses as community places. In this modification of the Nurcu-dershanes, Islamic education was offered on the basis of both Nursi's writings and Gülen's teaching, making use of the latter's tapes. As the network grew to an extent where Gülen could not always be present in person, the tapes served to convey his strong charisma to the audience. The "houses of light," run by the network and used as places of religious practice, still exist today. Here Gülen's discourse is conveyed, and dormitories are provided for the network's students. These units make up Gülen's own cemaat, the nucleus of his educational network (Agai 2004, 136–53; Yavuz 2003, 32ff.). Here Gülen motivated pupils to become future teachers.

By the end of the 1970s, the teaching of ordinary subjects—especially science—in public schools became a major concern, as the Islamic public saw the educational system as dominated by antireligious leftists. Gülen and his followers, on the other hand, hoped to educate a generation equipped with modern knowledge as well as Islamic morals. As there was sufficient provision of religious education both within the movement and elsewhere, Gülen tried to provide more than merely religious education. In 1978, his movement established its first study center (*dershane*) to prepare pupils for the central entrance examination for university access. Thus they specifically targeted universities, perceived as strongholds of the secular elite (Gülen 1997a, 106). In 1979 the movement began to publish the journal *Sızıntı* [www.sizinti.com], promoting a synthesis of scientific knowledge and Islam. His message was now spread through a whole set of public sermons, private and public lectures, and summer camps, as well as on tapes and in printed form.

Educational Activities Beyond Turkey's Borders

The coup of 1980 favored the educational engagement of Fethullah Gülen and his followers. His nationalistic, pro-junta state, antileftist, and anti-

Iranian discourse was totally in line with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. He always combined Turkish nationalism with the idea of a Turkish-Islam as the "purest form of Islam" (Agai 2004, 224–3). Further developments were shaped by the state's shift in educational policy.

From 1980 on, legal changes enabled the building of state-controlled private schools and the support of public schools (Öney 1994, 6,480). While all other Islamic groups supported Imam-Hatip schools or Qur'anic courses, Gülen advised his followers to invest in private, secular, elite high schools. At the time, these were favored by the state in order to educate indigenous patriotic elites (Mutlu 1997, 115, 144ff.). Up to this point, elite education had mainly been provided through foreign schools. Gülen believed that the combination of Islamic moral and secular knowledge could create a new Islamically conscious Turkish elite to lead the country, the "golden generation" (Gülen 1998a, 30). According to Gülen, the state changes in school curricula, establishing a legitimate place for Islam, made the secular school model a legitimate place for Islamic activities. This perception of the curriculum was fostered by Gülen's specific credo of modern science being crucial for the future of Islam. In the schools his movement established, Islam is not taught in a direct way, but teachers are expected to serve as charismatic examples for pupils, showing them that modern teachers can also be devoted Muslims. Gülen terms this approach *temsil,* i.e. indirect mission by representing Islam through one's own good example (Can 1996, 54).

Gülen's ideas were welcomed and adopted by a new Islam-oriented middle class (Yavuz 1999, 585), who looked to combine a secular elite education with Islamic morals, the precise curriculum of his schools. Gülen's ideas became even more wide-spread when his followers made appearances in the media with their own newspaper, magazines, radio stations, a TV channel, and on the Internet. Set up in the 1980s, the media network disseminates Gülen's discourse in different ways, mostly without referring to him directly (Agai 2004, 148–52; Yavuz 2003, 36ff.)

Motivated by his ideas, Gülen's followers became very active in the educational field. In the 1980s and 1990s, more than 150 private schools, as well as 150 dershanes offering additional courses and an even larger number of dormitories were established (Agai 2004, 13ff.). Never before has any Islamic group been able to exert a similar influence on the secular educational system in modern Turkey. It is not surprising, therefore, that Turkish public opinion on Gülen and his followers is strongly divided. They successfully removed the boundaries between "Islamic" and "secular" areas of society, which had been separated clearly for a long period. Even though Gülen's educational institutions are rooted in an Islamic concept, they are recognized by the laicistic Turkish state. In Turkey and elsewhere they form part of the almost always secular national educational

system. Usually the language of instruction is English, followed by Turkish or the national language if outside of Turkey. In Turkey, the general curriculum for the network's schools prescribes one hour of religious instruction per week, while in many other countries the schools do not offer any religious education at all. With the exception of a few Imam-Hatip type schools abroad, these institutions can thus hardly be considered Islamic schools in the strict sense.

There are different reasons for registering at these schools. Some parents simply want the best possible school without any regard to religious matters. Others are influenced by the idea of the cemaat and believe that this type of education will help their children to be successful in life and thereafter. A temporary solution, attempting to adapt to the Turkish republican context, has thus given the movement its core identity and reason for its transnational activities.

As stated above, since 1990, the movement has established over 250 educational institutions outside of Turkey, in nearly all parts of the world. They are concentrated in the postcommunist Balkan countries as well as the former Soviet Union.[5] Work in this field has made Gülen's network the most influential Turkish-Islamic movement, both in Turkey and abroad. The Arab states remain an exception for the most part. In most countries, the group's activities are fully supported by the Turkish state and included in its foreign policy. This is not the case in Western Europe, where the movement operates autonomously. A good example is Germany, where the movement is very active among the Turkish migrant population, with tutoring centers established in virtually every major city and private schools being planned. Interestingly the movement appears to attempt to reach even beyond the Turkish community.

In terms of formal organization, all facilities set up by Gülen's followers are independent units. Yet they are joined in an "educational network of virtue," as the leading figures of the cemaat have close interpersonal links. In most of the eastern countries, the group has a strong influence on future elites by basing their education on high international standards, a key to studies in Western countries. Demand for places exceeds availability throughout the system. As far as the pupils' future is concerned, education is perceived as a means of social change on an individual level. Within the religious part of the network, it is represented as a means of social change for society, the long-term goal in this respect being an improvement of society in general.

The transnational involvement of the cemaat, as well as its promotion on a state level, was supported by the TIS, claiming the Balkans and Central Asia as part of the Turkish-Islamic heritage. The United States supported Turkey's politics in the region, fearing Iranian influence. Furthermore, the TIS also made an effort to justify involvement in Central Asia,

the mystical homeland of Turks as well as of Turkish Islam. This was stimulated by a national euphoria in the early 1990s, foreseeing the twenty-first century as a century of the Turks, as articulated by Turgut Özal (Onis 2001, 66f.; Yavuz 2000, 199ff.), and claiming a Turkish influence zone from the Chinese Wall to the Adriatic Sea, as proclaimed by Süleyman Demirel (Bal 2000, 51).

As most former Communist states were suspicious of Islamic influence, the Turkish nationalistic approach of the movement enabled it to become transnational. The secular and sometimes repressive Turkish experience produced a version of Islamic thought that could easily be applied in these countries.

With the rise of political Islam in Turkey during the 1990s, the moderate-conservative parties styled Gülen as a "model Muslim," able to offer a synthesis of Islamic values with the separation of Islam and politics demanded by Kemalism. He distanced himself from political Islam by supporting EU accession efforts and expressing very critical views both of the Islamic Republic of Iran and of political orientations in other Muslim countries. This created a suitable climate for the implementation of Gülen's ideas both on a national and a transnational level (Kösebalaban 2003; Hermann 1996).

Following the antifundamentalist campaign of February 1997, Gülen became the target of a state campaign labeling him an Islamic menace in 1999. While these accusations have been withdrawn (Yavuz 2003, 403ff.) Fethullah Gülen has since relocated to the United States. Under the current government, there no longer are any objections against his person and the schools of his followers remain in operation.

The Gülen Discourse

How can we understand the development of an Islamic movement, focusing on non-Islamic education? How did the ideas of Fethullah Gülen, a person deeply rooted in a conservative Islamic environment, emerge? In light of his extensive writings, it is clear that Fethullah Gülen does not advocate a new theology. In this he distinguishes his approach from that of the state, particularly as the latter is propagated in universities. His achievement does not lie in the reinterpretation of religious texts using new methods. Instead he refers to classical authorities of theology and takes up their line of arguments. His understanding of Islam is thus comparable to conservative mainstream ideas. Yet Gülen produces new outcomes by introducing a crucial factor to his argument: social reality, which has to be changed and requires compromises which are therefore Islamically justifiable. This means that gender relations, for example, may

be redefined in practice if required by educational work. Gender segregation, on the other hand, remains an ideal inside the cemaat and is never touched on in theory. Gülen and his followers understand themselves to be conservative and follow an orthoprax understanding of Islam. Due to their engagement in different forms of social activities, however, their practice is more liberal than the theoretical understanding of the movement. I believe that Gülen's personal charisma as a conservative and pious Muslim allows both him and the movement to be more liberal in practice than in theory. The movement's conservative image allows people who could never be reached by the state's reformist discourse to participate in new forms of Islamic engagement.

Gülen's discourse on education consists of numerous elements that can only be briefly summarized here.[6] One feature of this discourse is an ambiguity of statements, as well as the "packaging" of ideas in different ways suited for the respective audience. Gülen shows a distinct readiness to adapt his message, theorized in writing, to the targeted audience. One specific strategy used to attract people is the presentation of his ideas without stressing their Islamic background. The basic principles of this discourse present an intriguing mix of theological conservativism and practical innovation.

Struggle for the Preservation of Islam in the Modern Age

Fethullah Gülen's ideas on the relationship between revelation and science, a key concept in understanding his followers' engagement in modern education, are rooted in the teachings of the Turkish-Islamic reformer Said Nursi. His view of Islam was shaped by several basic assumptions, shared and developed further by Gülen (see Agai 2005). First, on the question of Islam and the secular nation-state, Nursi sees the modern secular state as a powerful opponent. Direct confrontation can only harm one's own Islamic interests, as the state will inevitably respond with repression. Both Nursi and Gülen state clearly that God judges each individual personally for the life led. Any Islamic reform movement must therefore concentrate on guiding individuals along the right path: The state order must be accepted as the framework for one's own dealings, in order to concentrate on more important tasks at the individual level. Such guidance is not of a fixed nature—religious service, *hizmet*, has to be rendered according to time and space and is in permanent change. The schools can therefore be understood to be a result of this interpretation, finding the best path for Islam in view of a specific historical context (Agai 2002, 29–32, 38ff.). Gülen's approach focuses on perceived needs and can only be understood through an active perspective, i.e. through direct contact with the followers themselves. After all, many activities do not seem necessarily Islamic per se.

Second, with regard to Islam and the challenge of modernity, Gulen argues that man lives in an age of science and technology, for which there is no alternative. The only options are to shape this age in a religious way, or to forfeit the power to exert any influence at all. "The dissatisfied have never shaped history," as he puts it. He seeks a "middle way between modernity and the Muslim tradition" (Kuru 2003, 129), which can only be applied if modernity is shaped in an Islamic sense. Gülen eschews a revolutionary approach. He counters the idea of retreating from secular society, prevalent in religious circles under the notion of *hijra*, with that of active engagement, a contribution to social reform. Both Nursi and Gülen believe that it is possible to separate science from materialism and positivism, which they perceive as enemies of religion, through active participation in scientific discourse.

Third, on the impact of science on religion, Nursi and Gülen emphasize that, if combined with an Islamic approach, science can serve as a means to rationally comprehend God by studying His creation (Agai 2002, 31). This is the only way to preserve religion in the modern age, which is shaped, as indicated above, by science and technology. Such a concept enriches the rational study of the world, the foundations of which are provided in the secular school, with a religious significance. Furthermore, science forms the basis of economic prosperity, social harmony, and national independence: all goals necessary for the survival of both the modern Turkish state and Islam. This social vision was very important for both Nursi and Gülen and in their eyes justifies the reconsideration of Islamic education in light of current needs.

Fourth, on matters of theology and modernity, Gulen emphasizes that theological debate is not a priority in an era in which the very existence of religion itself is threatened. Theology should thus emphasize areas in which there is consensus and gloss over the more detailed issues. Conservative Islamic views on gender relations, pluralism, and religious obligations ought therefore not to be challenged in theoretical debates. For Gülen—unlike other reformers—the headscarf still remains a religious obligation according to the Qur'an, but he advises that if a girl has to choose between the headscarf and access to higher education, the latter is a more important Islamic obligation. This enables him to maintain traditional Islamic arguments whilst being "Turkish secular" in practice. Gülen thus sidesteps theological debates by introducing higher Islamic principles such as the sociopolitical reality which gives priority to participation in modern society. At the same time, he manages not to question established interpretations of Islam. He argues that it is more important to shape the secular educational system with Islamic teachers than attempting to create an Islamic state which might bring Turkish society to civil war and thus harm long term Islamic interests.

Having established these foundations of Gülen's vision of Islam in the modern context, I shall show how he has been able to communicate his ideas to the broad Turkish public, the true backbone of his movement.

Uniting Turkish Nationalism and Islam with Modernity

A crucial factor in Gülen's ascendance in Turkey is his synthesis of Turkish nationalism and Islam. His adherents in other countries have adopted this approach, expanding the nationalist principle to suit local conditions and developing it into local forms of patriotism (Turam 2003). Gülen and his followers accept today's world of nation-states and open borders and do not propagate a utopian ummatist state. Even though he demanded the introduction of "visas" for foreign cultural influence in the 1980s and early 1990s (Gülen 1997b, 43, 178), Gülen now advocates open borders, democracy, and dialogue. In doing so he hopes to regain validity for Islam, which had to be protected in the past. As Gülen sees no way of halting globalization, he wants to harness it as an opportunity (Yavuz 2003, 27ff.).

This task requires a secular education rather than a theological one, as well as targeted use of modern media and economic influences. All other major Islamic groups in Turkey agree with Gülen that there is no need to discuss Islamic obligations, whilst unanimously criticizing any material or ideological dependency on the West with its materialistic and positivistic orientation. For Gülen, however, the solution lies in education rather than politics. To him, national and cultural independence can only be preserved if Muslims succeed in shaping the modern world according to their own beliefs, rather than rejecting modernity and losing all control over its developments. In view of this, he urges his followers to accept the secular state and to gradually change it through their own actions, as his aims in society can only be achieved when given a place in a legal framework based on general desires. Gülen's schools are a good example of this, in that they do not stress the Islamic identity of the founders to begin with.

It would appear that, in the long run, the movement learned from missionary schools in Turkey which it criticized heavily until the early 1990s seeing them as reason for the false orientation of the Turkish-Western elite. Initially the movement polemicized against them as "blood cancer," "Trojan horses," and "parasites" that poisoned society from within and aided the Western conquest of Turkish society (Gülen 1995, 79, 240; 1998b, 14; 1997c, 60; Agai 2004, 217–20). Yet this initial cause for concern was gradually recognized as a possible solution. Indeed by influencing the education of future elites—perceived as the root of the problem at hand, as shown above—Gülen's network could publicize and spread their own ideology, thus counteracting the impact of Western ideologies.

Gülen's earlier writings, based on conspiracy theories against Turkey, are full of antimissionary and anti-Western passages (Gülen 1997a, 108; 1997b, 42b; 1995, 140). Today, he accepts religious plurality as a fact and stresses the common factors of all religions wherever possible. Gülen is obviously aware that his own movement can only succeed in an atmosphere of religious tolerance, as it has shared interests with other religious groups. This change of heart is due to direct contact with other cultures, caused by focusing on education. My field research clearly showed that the younger generation, well traveled and educated in foreign languages as well secular subjects, sees the world differently from some of the first generation in the cemaat, who did not travel far and did not know any Western languages. Contact with other cultures and religions has smoothed the nationalistic and sometimes very Turkish-Islamic rhetoric of Fethullah Gülen and many of his followers. Dialogue and tolerance are key words in promoting the movement's ideas today.

Morality and Education before Politics and Theology

As mentioned above, Fethullah Gülen's sermons are not necessarily innovative theologically. He preaches classic Islamic maxims of conduct: jihad, the "exertion" on the path to God; *irşad*, religious and moral guidance; *tebliğ*, the dissemination of Islam and, above all, hizmet, which is peaceful "service" in God's name. It is striking how conventional his religious reasoning is when persuading listeners of what is right according to Islam, whilst simultaneously proposing entirely new ways of implementing these convictions in the given framework. In Gülen's rhetoric, the schoolteacher becomes a prophet, fulfilling the aforementioned Islamic principles by imparting secular school knowledge.[7] A key point for Gülen is that Islamic principles are unchangeable, but must be given concrete new forms in each era. By creating new Islamic fields of action on the basis of traditional Islamic terminology and conventional definitions, he gains influence in conservative Islamic circles. At the same time, however, his actions have extremely innovative implications for the present day, for example, through modern education. Gülen avoids contradictions between Islamic and secular law by refusing to engage with other Turkish, Iranian, or Arab reformists. Instead he simply argues that questions of morality and education are more essential than political issues for today's Islam and for mankind in general. Furthermore he states that present-day Muslims are confronted with entirely different problems—e.g., the need for a good education—than the introduction of the Shariʿa. Gülen sidesteps critical questions, factually accepting the current context. On this basis, Ihsan Yilmaz calls his approach ijtihad (religious reasoning) and *tajdid* (religious reform) by conduct (Yilmaz 2003) as opposed to reform by theory.

Gülen has developed an ethic of good works that opens up new fields of society for Islamic activities as well as elevating work and efficiency to maxims of life. In this context, work dedicated to reaching an Islamic goal becomes an act in the service of God even if only a portion of the earnings is donated to the cause. In this, Gülen's reasoning resembles the Weberian concept of the "Protestant ethic." Educational work and support of education in particular are endowed with the highest Islamic value (Özdalga 2000; Agai 2002, 39). Gülen presents his cemaat as the most effective way to serve the religious cause (Agai 2006), ensuring the highest religious reward.

In dealing with others, Gülen and his followers see it as more important to convey at least some of their own values, keeping their own Islamic motivation in the background, than to forfeit influence beyond Islamic circles by being too strongly and openly Islamic. Both the internal Islamization of the cemaat's whole work and even its compromises, as well as the concept of successful religious service resulting from a rational planning process, help us to understand not only the Islamic dimension of Gülen's network but also the secret of its success in secular educational activities (Agai 2004, 230–46). In Gülen's view, a society can only be changed through its individuals. His cemaat is therefore dedicated to educating a "new generation," aiming to change society in the long run.

Efficiency is an important factor in school teaching. Teachers appear highly motivated to introduce new teaching methods, hoping to be effective in teaching not only as a religious obligation but also because the schools evaluate the teachers' achievements regularly. The publishing houses belonging to the cemaat regularly publish translations of Western texts on education, but also publish in-house discourses on teaching methods. While Gülen and his followers frequently proclaim that their schools unite the knowledge and teaching of the first medreses with that of the Sufi convents (tekkes), this may be seen as a merely rhetorical argument. Indeed, there is no relation whatsoever between these historical educational institutions and the actual schools and their way of teaching.

Conclusion

This study has revealed the complex interplay between a strictly applied secular state ideology and contemporary Islamic thought, resulting not only in new forms of state activities in the religious sphere but also in the emergence of religious figures in the secular sphere. On the one hand, Islamic theology as promoted in universities from the 1950s onwards was able to introduce some modernist approaches, yet these failed to reach all parts of society. On the other hand, Republican laws and policies have favored the emergence of Fethullah Gülen, representing an aspect of non-

state Islam in Turkey. He has been able to realize reforms without openly challenging traditional Islamic stances by making Muslim participation in the process of modernization a key aim of his understanding of Islam. Ever since its establishment, the Republic of Turkey has faced the problem that some aspects of Islamic learning question the secular nature of the state. While Gülen does not challenge normative texts and positions, he does not attempt entirely new readings in the manner of some state-theologians either. Instead he chooses a pragmatic approach in simply declaring that such issues are not essential for present-day Islam. In this, Gülen represents a large proportion of Muslims in Turkey who accept Turkish secularism as a fact and do not challenge the state, yet want to make their own way in society and influence their immediate environment according to their beliefs. It remains to be seen whether, and if so when, the ever growing engagement and compromise with secular society has to be accepted as a permanent solution rather than a provisional one. After all, this would require entirely new forms of theology.

The secular state had a strong impact on the ideas and conduct of the movement, helping it to gain transnational importance in other, strictly secular contexts. Turkey is a good example of an inversion of the classical dichotomy between Islamic and state education. The secular state itself is the most important player in the religious sphere and has incorporated elements of religious education. One question, which sees very little discussion in Turkey, remains: the future of homogenizing Turkish state-Islam within the European context. A general fear within the Directorate of Religious Affairs and its supporters is that increased religious freedom may lead to fragmentation and radicalization of the Islamic community, thus undermining the cohesion of Turkish society.

The Gülen group has become an important part of secular state education: it has adopted the content of secular state education and its practices of teaching in order to express its vision of Islamic education in the twenty-first century. The movement's schoolteachers are the product of Republican universities and schools and share the same conceptions of knowledge. They no longer represent the cast of ʿulama, but are Republican teachers with specific Islamic motivations, formulated through Fethullah Gülen's discourse.

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Notes

1. Due to the European Union accession efforts, laws were changed in this field. We will have to wait to see the practical effects.

2. Similar processes occurred during the creation of other nations as well, as the nationalist narrative required a clear distinction from the (in most cases, very close) neighbors (Anderson 2002, 192–9).

3. Just recently, the State Minister overseeing the Directorate for Religious Affairs, Mehmet Aydin, said about current missionary activities in Turkey: "The goal of those activities is harming the cultural, religious, national, and historical unity of the people of Turkey," thereby stressing the strong relation between Islam and national identity. The same newspaper reports, on the same page, that the president of Northern Cyprus showed his commitment to Turkey with a Turkish flag in one hand and the Qur'an in the other. (*Turkish Daily News* 2005)

4. For a perceptive sociological study of the Imam-Hatip schools and their social meaning, with figures based on empirical research and curricula, see Ruşen Çakır et al. (Çakır 2004).

5. Regarding the schools in Central Asia, see Balci, 2003; for a list of schools and their location Agai 2004, 14.

6. The following assumptions are mainly based on my own analysis of the work of Fethullah Gülen and field research among his followers in different countries (published in Agai 2004).

7. My own field research has shown the motivating capacity of this discourse among male teachers and the same observation was made by Elisabeth Özdalga regarding female teachers (Özdalga 2003).

CHAPTER 8

Pesantren and Madrasa: Muslim Schools and National Ideals in Indonesia

Azyumardi Azra, Dina Afrianty, and Robert W. Hefner

The October 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia, in which more than two hundred people died, raised concerns in Indonesian and Western policy circles about the possible involvement of some of Indonesia's modern Islamic schools (madrasas) and traditionalist boarding schools (*pesantrens*) in promoting religious radicalism. Police investigations traced the Bali bombers back to a small pesantren in Lamongan, East Java. Some of the staff and students at the Lamongan school, investigations revealed, had studied with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the spiritual head of the al-Mukmin pesantren in Ngruki, Central Java, and a man identified by intelligence analysts as the *amir* of the *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), an extremist group alleged to have carried out bombing campaigns in Indonesia and the Philippines. Although Ba'asyir denied involvement in the Bali attacks, police investigations confirmed that students from both the Ngruki and Lamongan schools had participated in these and other acts of violence (ICG 2002b).

Coming in the aftermath of the U.S.-led campaign against the Taliban and al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan, the involvement of pesantren students in terrorist violence raised questions as to the extent of support for political extremism in Indonesia's Islamic schools. A few Western analysts were concerned that they saw troubling parallels between the situation in Indonesia and events in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s. Analysts noted that Afghanistan's Taliban had emerged out of madrasas located near refugee camps along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. During the 1980s, the madrasas in these territories had grown rapidly, in part because of the inability of Pakistan's national educational system to meet the needs of poor citizens (see ICG 2002a; Zaman 2002, 137–9). As a result of the East Asian financial crisis of late 1997 to 2001, Indonesia's educational system had also experienced a decline in state infrastructural capacity. Although in the early 1990s, the country had announced an ambitious goal of achieving nine years of universal education, enrollments in state schools dipped noticeably, especially among the poor. In contrast,

enrollments in pesantrens and madrasas grew steadily (see below). Moreover, in the months following the collapse of President Soeharto's New Order government in May 1998, the country witnessed the emergence of hundreds of Islamist paramilitaries (*laskar*), some of which made no secret of their radical sympathies. As with the Laskar Jihad in Yogyakarta and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) in Jakarta (Hefner 2005; Jamhari and Jahroni 2004), the largest paramilitaries had ties to independent pesantrens. Both the Laskar Jihad and the FPI went on to play a central role in the mobilization of militants against Christian gangs in the troubled provinces of Maluku and North Maluku, where thousands died in communal violence between 1999 and 2004. For all these reasons, many observers feared there were worrying parallels between Pakistan and Indonesia's Islamic schools.

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the structure and varieties of Islamic education in modern Indonesia, the social and intellectual forces that have propelled their modern transformation, and the relationship of changes in Islamic education to broader developments in state and society.[1] The largest Muslim-majority country in the world (pop. 225 m.), Indonesia has 10,000 residential boarding schools (pesantrens*)* and 37,000 madrasas. Of the 44 million students currently enrolled in the formal educational system from primary to secondary school, 5.7 million or 13 percent are enrolled in madrasas. Although the state regulates Islamic education and provides small subsidies to some schools, 90 percent of these schools are primarily privately funded, and their day-to-day operations are under the control of local Muslim educators.

Any generalization about an Islamic educational system as vast as Indonesia's is risky. Nonetheless, the central trend in Islamic education in this country is important and clear. Although there are a few radical schools in the broader system, the system's most striking feature is not radicalism but the willingness of Muslim educators to adapt their educational programs to the ideals of Indonesian nationhood and the Muslim public's demand for marketable skills and general education. For most of the last century Islamic education in Indonesia has become more, not less, involved with general education and "Western"-style subjects and pedagogies. Few Islamic school systems in the Muslim world show a comparable depth of engagement on the part of Islamic educators. The difference reflects the fact that, more than their counterparts in countries like Turkey, Pakistan, and Egypt, "political" Muslims in this Southeast Asian country identified with the project of national development and embraced most of its programs for progress and cultural citizenship (Hefner 2000). Most Muslim educators have not seen the country's nation-making and educational projects as antithetical to Islam.

The relative openness of Muslim schools in Indonesia to educational innovations also reflects the fact that early on Muslim educators understood that even pious parents wanted their children to acquire practical and vocational skills as well as familiarity with the tenets of Islam. This trend was already visible during the first decades of the twentieth century, but it became especially striking during the economic boom of the 1980s and 1990s. During those years, Muslim parents from all social backgrounds, but especially the rapidly growing middle class, recognized that education is vital for children's social and economic success. The conviction that education should serve practical as well as religious ends provided an important bridge between the activities of local Muslim educators and the desires of state educators. The result has been an Islamic educational system that ranks among the most open and innovative in the world.

Types of Islamic Schools

Formal Islamic education in Indonesia assumes several institutional forms. Contrary to the caricature of madrasas as medieval institutions, all have undergone extensive reform since the first years of the twentieth century. The oldest schools vary in their terminology and social organization, but included traditionalist institutions like the pesantren (Java, South Kalimantan), the *pondok* (Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Malay, portions of Sumatra), the *surau* (West Sumatra), and the *dayah* (Aceh), among others. What made all these institutions "traditionalist" was that, until the early years of the twentieth century, their curricula consisted almost entirely of instruction in classical Islamic traditions of knowledge. Equally important, responsibility for teaching and management in these institutions lay in the hands of 'ulama or, as they are known in Java, *kyai*. The 'ulama who directed these schools were themselves graduates of traditionalist schools. The aim of traditionalist education, then, was to transmit religious knowledge, preserve the Islamic tradition as a whole, and serve as a center for the training and social reproduction of 'ulama.

Not all of the traditionalist schools operative in late nineteenth-century Indonesia were residential, but the largest and most influential were. Among these schools, the Java-based pesantren is still the largest and the best known, and its features shed light on traditionalist education as a whole. Small pesantrens had existed in Java since the sixteenth century, if not earlier, especially in the coastal regions which were first to convert to Islam.[2] It was only in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, however, that pesantrens spread into interior Java, as a fast-growing community of returning pilgrims (*hajji*) and students trained in Mecca and

Medina took advantage of the colonial peace to establish schools in territories which prior to this time had been only nominally Muslim (see Dhofier 1999; Laffan 2003).

The pesantren is a residential school dedicated to the transmission of the classical Islamic sciences, including study of the Qur'an and hadith, jurisprudence (fiqh), Arabic grammar, mysticism (tasawwuf), and the Arab sciences (*alat*). In Java and several other parts of Indonesia, the classical commentaries which were the focus of traditionalist study were known as "yellow scriptures" (*kitab kuning*, see van Bruinessen 1995), because of the color of the paper on which they were written. A typical pesantren complex consists of a mosque, study-rooms (in early times located in the kyai's residence, but today usually a separate classroom complex), dormitories, and the kyai's house. Since the 1970s, more and more pesantrens have erected permanent brick and concrete buildings; the largest have vast building complexes for thousands of students.[3]

In years past, the majority of students or *santri* (literally, student of a pesantren) entered the pesantren at age eleven or twelve and resided for three to four years—long enough, it was hoped, to acquire the basic knowledge required to serve as a mosque leader (imam) or local religious teacher (*ustadz*). In addition to pietistic motives, employment in the religious field has always been one of the primary reasons students choose to study at pesantren. A small percentage of students went on to dedicate eight, ten, or even more years to study in one or several pesantrens. It was, and to a significant degree still is, from among the ranks of these students that distinguished senior scholars in the religious sciences emerge.

After the arrival of steamship travel in the 1840s, Muslims across Southeast Asia strengthened their ties to centers of learning in the Middle East (Azra 1999b; Roff 1970).[4] For senior religious students, this meant that the educational pilgrimage that had begun in a small boarding school in rural Sumatra, Java, or south Sulawesi might culminate with study at a mosque school in Mecca, Medina, or Cairo. Still today, some religious students complete their educational careers with study in the Middle East. However, a new trend has developed over the past twenty years. Senior santri are now more likely to crown their religious education with study at one of Indonesia's four National Islamic Universities or ten State Islamic Institutes (IAIN) than in the Middle East (see below).[5]

Although pesantrens are still central to the training of traditionalist religious scholars, the pesantren system experienced great changes over the course of the twentieth century. The change was primarily a response to two developments: the Dutch colonial authorities' introduction of general education for native youth, and, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the spread of modern Islamic madrasas across Indonesia (see below). In response to these changes in the educational field, in the 1920s

several pesantrens expanded their curricula offerings to include general educational materials (mathematics, history, English) as well as the religious sciences (Dhofier 1999, 18). By the 1950s the addition of general materials had become the rule rather than the exception in pesantrens. Government-sponsored reforms initiated in the late 1970s now ensure that all pesantren students are obliged to complete a general elementary education in addition to their religious studies (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 124–6). The students do so by either attending a state school or by participating in a program of general education housed at classroom facilities in or adjacent to the pesantren, in programs that typically follow a state-mandated curriculum.

As this discussion illustrates, by the early 1900s pesantrens and kindred traditionalist institutions were no longer the only Islamic schools in Indonesia. Indeed, over the course of the twentieth century the proportion of Muslim students trained in traditionalist institutions gradually declined in favor of a new and more self-consciously modernist institution, the madrasa. In the Middle East, the phrase madrasa has varied meanings, but in religious settings it usually refers to an institution of higher Islamic learning, like the famous al-Azhar in Cairo, Egypt (see Zeghal, this volume). Much as with Mali's madrasas described by Louis Brenner in this volume, in Indonesia what distinguishes a madrasa is not higher education in the Islamic sciences but the inclusion of general educational courses with instruction in the religious sciences. The madrasa's teaching methods also differ from those of traditional pesantrens. The modern classroom and blackboard replace the pesantren's halqa circle huddled on the floor around a teacher. Textbooks and annual examinations replace the informal and loosely organized study of the classical religious commentaries (kitab kuning). Ties, dress shirts, and Western-style pants replace the sarong and Javanese shirt. No less significant, finally, teachers at madrasas are typically attributed none of the powers of healing and spiritual intermediation associated with traditionalist scholars in Indonesia, as in many other parts of the Muslim world (see Brenner and Metcalf chapters, this volume).

When madrasas were first established in West Sumatra and south-central Java in the early twentieth century, traditionalists denounced the institutions as Western and irreligious. The grain of truth to this allegation was that the founders of these madrasas readily admitted that the model for their educational reforms came from Dutch government and Christian missionary schools. After Indonesian independence, madrasas were put under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and Muslim educators collaborated with that ministry to develop a standardized curriculum. Following the enactment of the 1989 Law on Education,

madrasa directors adjusted their curriculum further according to standards issued by the Ministry of National Education (MONE).

In addition to having a general educational curriculum, the Indonesian madrasa developed several other traits that distinguish it from traditionalist institutions: a strong emphasis on educating girls, sports and scouting programs, school newspapers and journals, and special educational programs for orphans and the poor. As standardized by the Ministry of Religion in the 1970s, madrasas now have three levels of graded instruction: the Madrasa Ibtida'iyah (MI), or elementary madrasa, grades one through six; a junior secondary Madrasa Tsanawiyah (MTS), grades seven through nine; and a senior secondary Madrasa Aliyah (MA), grades ten through twelve. Following the enactment of the 1989 National Law on Education (UUSPN, *Undang-undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*), the senior Madrasa Aliyah was divided into four divisions of specialization: natural sciences, social sciences, vocational training, and the Islamic sciences (*li al-tafaqquh fi al-din*).

From early on in the twentieth century, there was a third category of Islamic school, known simply as the Islamic school (sekolah Islam). Founded in 1912, Indonesia's largest modernist Muslim organization, the Muhammadiyah, which today claims some 25–30 million members, referred to most of its schools with this phrase. The choice was intended to signal that Muhammadiyah schools were concerned with providing even higher-quality general education than were ordinary madrasas. Rather than being limited to a set number of topics, a religious spirit, with a notably modernist air, was to infuse the study of general as well as religious topics.

In practice it is sometimes difficult to distinguish madrasas from sekolah Islam; government statistics in Indonesia merge the two categories. Among Muslim educators today, however, the term "Islamic school" typically refers to schools that dedicate an even greater proportion of their curriculum to general education in topics like science, history, social studies, and foreign languages. Since the late 1990s, elite Islamic schools with special (and relatively expensive) programs in the sciences, English language-training, and the arts have become a preferred educational venue for members of the new Muslim middle class.

Enrollment Trends

Enrollments in all types of Islamic schools have grown steadily since the 1970s. Enrollment statistics are subject to minor imprecision, because there is some overlap between pesantren and madrasa figures. In the 1950s and 1960s, as it became clear to parents of school age children that

Table 1
Pesantren Schools and Enrollments

Year	*Number Pesantren*	*Number Students*
1977	4,195	677,384
1997	9,388	1,770,760

Source: Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 68.

education was critical to economic success, many pesantrens responded by opening madrasas or general elementary schools (sekolah dasar) to provide nonreligious and vocational instruction. The trend accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s, so that, today, the largest and most popular pesantrens have madrasas or general elementary schools located on their grounds.[6] Many santris enroll in the madrasa or general school during the morning and devote their afternoon and evenings to religious instruction. In government statistics on students in general and religious schools, these "double enrollees" are counted twice.

Pesantren and Madrasa Enrollments

Notwithstanding this statistical overlap, enrollment trends in Islamic schools are clear. Statistics from the Ministry of Religion indicate that the number of pesantrens more than doubled between 1977 and 1997, while the number of santri students increased by 260 percent (see table 1).

These statistics may in fact be conservative, because government statistics sometimes overlook smaller educational institutions. In Indonesia as in other parts of the Muslim world, traditionalist education has tended to be "persistently informal," and the informality often results in underreporting in official statistics.[7]

Enrollment trends in madrasas and Islamic schools (sekolah Islam) show a similar pattern of growth. The government groups these second and third types of Islamic schools into a single category, madrasa. Most combine general education (usually about 70 percent of the curriculum) with religious instruction (30 percent). The 2001–02 data indicate that madrasas make a vital contribution to public education, educating 13 percent of the primary, intermediate, and secondary school age population.

Two additional points stand out from table 2. The first is that madrasa enrollments increase significantly during the junior secondary school years (grades 7–9), surging to a full 21 percent of the student population. This pattern is consistent with interview information provided to the authors of this chapter by parents of madrasa students. Not unlike their

Table 2
Pupils in General Education and Madrasas, All Levels, 2001–02

Level of School	*General Education*	*Madrasa Pupils*	*%*	*Total*
Primary	25,850,849	3,075,528	11%	28,926,377
Junior secondary	7,466,458	1,961,511	21%	9,427,969
Primary and Junior	33,317,307	5,037,039	13%	38,354,346
Senior secondary	5,051,640	661,104	13%	5,712,744
Total	38,368,947	5,698,143	13%	44,067,090

Source: MORA 2003, 12.

counterparts in the contemporary West, Indonesian parents regard the teen years as a time of potential turmoil. Yet it is during these same years that a youth is expected to assume a greater measure of devotional responsibilities as a Muslim. Many parents thus feel that it is especially important during these years to enroll their children in Islamic schools.

A second point to make about the relative share of madrasas in overall education is that figures vary significantly by province. Not surprisingly, enrollments are especially low in provinces like Bali (2.2 percent of students in madrasas) and Papua (1.1 percent), where Muslims make up only a small proportion of the population. Six provinces, meanwhile, have higher than average madrasa enrollments: Jambi (34 percent), East Java (25 percent), South Kalimantan (16 percent), Aceh (15 percent), Central Java (13 percent), and Banten (12 percent; MORA 2003, 15). All these are provinces in which a more-or-less traditionalist Islam was well established by the early years of the twentieth century, and the strong emphasis on religious education reflects that tradition more than it does a commitment to reformist or modernist Islam.

Madrasas and pesantrens, it should be noted, are also disproportionately located in the countryside. A ten-province study by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1999 indicated that 85 percent of pesantrens in the provinces examined are located in rural areas (IER 1999). Fourteen percent are located in suburban districts, and just 0.8 percent in cities.

Statistical evidence indicates that annual growth in madrasa enrollment has remained strong even during times of economic downturn. In the late 1990s, Indonesia was hit by the East Asian financial crisis, with the result that enrollment in government schools declined. During the same period, however, enrollment in madrasas continued to grow. The growth was greatest at the level of senior secondary madrasa education.

Table 3
Annual Growth in Madrasa Enrollment Relative to General Schools 1998–2001

Level of School	*General Education*	*Madrasa*
Primary	–0.2%	2.5%
Junior secondary	0.1%	3.3%
Senior secondary	2.4%	9.4%

Source: MORA 2003, 19.

In evaluating the data presented in tables 1–3, it is important to remember that Islamic education is primarily financed and managed on a private basis. All pesantrens are privately owned. As late as 1989, some 96 percent of madrasas were privately owned as well (Prabowo and Guillot 1997, 182). In the mid-1990s, however, the government responded to the growing public demand for madrasa education by opening publicly owned madrasas. Today, state-owned madrasas account for 6.4 percent of madrasas at the primary level, 10.6 percent at the junior secondary level, and 13 percent at the senior secondary level. Private madrasas often receive small government grants for specific programs or infrastructures, but this state support comprises a small proportion of their total funding.

Gender and Islamic Education

Another important statistic concerning enrollment in Islamic educational institutions concerns variation by gender. Until the 1910s, pesantrens and madrasas were male only institutions (Dhofier 1999, 14, 18). Some girls, especially from pious families, received religious instruction, but it was usually provided by teachers invited into the girl's home or through informal religious study at a mosque or prayer house. In the 1910s, several pesantrens opened special separate facilities for girls (Dhofier 1999, 17). Shortly thereafter some madrasas opened their doors to girls. Despite these efforts, girls' enrollment continued to lag behind boys'.

In recent decades, however, the movement of young women into Islamic schools has steadily increased, until girls' enrollment today equals or exceeds boys. As table 4 indicates, at the primary and junior levels of madrasa education, boys and girls are represented in near equal numbers. At the senior secondary level, however, girls outnumber boys 55 percent to 45 percent. These figures contrast with those from senior secondary schools in the general educational system. There, boys outnumber girls 53 percent to 47 percent. These statistics challenge the general assumption that in the Muslim world girls and women have fewer educational opportunities and less access to the public sphere. In Indonesia, at least as far

Table 4
Male and Female Pupils in Madrasa and General Schools, 2001–02

	Percent Male	*Percent Female*
Primary school, general	51	49
Madrasa Ibtidaiyah	50	50
Junior secondary school, general	56	44
Madrasa tsanawiyah	49	51
Senior secondary school, general	53	47
Madrasa aliyah	45	55

Source: MORA 2003, 22.

as madrasa education is concerned, girls have similar opportunities to their male counterparts.[8]

Field studies and the authors' interviews indicate that the contrast between girls' enrollment in general schools and in madrasa reflects several influences. Many pious parents believe that Islamic schools provide a more secure environment for adolescent girls. Many parents also presume that boys are likely to be the breadwinner in the family, and the parents feel that enrollment in a general public school is more important for boys because, on average, public schools are of slightly better quality than madrasas (see table 5). No less significant, finally, since the Islamic resurgence of the 1970s, young women have come to play an increasingly important role in Islamic predication (Ind., *dakwah*), and religious education is an important pathway into this new religious field (cf., for Egypt, Mahmood 2005).

The statistical information in tables 1–4 shows that Islamic schools play an important role in Indonesia's overall educational system. Although pesantrens provide training in Islamic traditions of knowledge, most pesantren students receive considerable instruction in subjects of a general as well as religious nature. Unlike the situation in some other countries, then, students in Islamic schools are for several years exposed to the same general educational materials as students who enroll in nonreligious public schools. The arrangement diminishes but does not entirely eliminate the cultural duality between Islamic and general education.

Student Performance and the Perceived Hierarchy of Schooling

Although Islamic education in Indonesia is now thoroughly mainstream, there is still a performance gap between madrasas and general schools. In Indonesia, students at both the junior secondary and the senior secondary levels are required to pass national examinations. Tellingly, the failure

Table 5
Failure Rates in National Final Examination, Madrasas and General Schools

	Failure Rate	*Pass Rate*
General junior secondary school	3.9%	96.1%
Junior secondary madrasa (tsanawiyah)	10.9%	89.1%
General senior secondary school	5.7%	94.3%
Senior secondary madrasa (aliyah)	15.4%	84.6%

Source: MORA 2003, 76.

rates in junior secondary (tsanawiyah) and senior secondary (aliyah) schools are still two and one half times those of students in the general educational system.

The madrasa students' higher failure rates reflect several influences. First, by comparison with the general educational system, madrasas tend to serve a population that is disproportionately rural and disadvantaged. Studies undertaken by the Ministry of Religion indicate that over 50 percent of madrasa students are children of farmers or laborers, a figure about 50 percent higher than students in the general educational system (MORA 2003, 13). Second, and no less important, state subsidies per pupil at the elementary school level in state and private madrasas average only about 75 percent and 38 percent respectively of the average subsidy per pupil provided for students in general elementary schools (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 127). The results of this disparity are broadly apparent to anyone who visits madrasas or pesantrens. Although the best madrasas, particularly those run by the Muhammadiyah or activists from the Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS), have high quality facilities, ordinary madrasas have noticeably poorer facilities and teachers are paid less.

Middle-class Muslim parents are aware of these performance disparities. Those with sufficient income make great sacrifices to send their children to better quality and more expensive private madrasas. The recent growth of modern "Islamic schools" (*sekolah Islam*) also reflects this perceived hierarchy of educational status, since these schools, with their even stronger emphasis on general education, are regarded as standing above the Islamic school mean.

Reforming Islamic Education

The phrase "educational dualism" refers to one of the most pervasive legacies of the colonial era in the Muslim world: the existence of an Is-

lamic educational system with little if any general educational content alongside a secular educational system with little if any Islamic content. In the independence period following the Second World War, nationalist leaders across the Muslim world made the reduction or elimination of educational dualism a pillar of their developmentalist projects. In some countries, efforts to integrate the two systems met with considerable opposition from Islamic scholars, creating suspicions that have lingered to this day (for example, see Hashim 1996).

In this as in so many other respects, the historical pattern in Indonesia differs from that seen in some other Muslim countries. Already in the 1910s and 1920s reform-minded Muslims had taken steps to diminish educational dualism by introducing general educational materials into their school curricula. The innovation reflected the growing influence of Islamic reformism in the native population. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Cairo became a popular destination for Indonesians seeking higher education in the Islamic sciences, and students in Cairo were exposed to new ideas of religious reform and political activism (Laffan 2003; Azra 1999b; Roff 1970). Back in the Dutch Indies, Cairene graduates were disproportionately represented in the ranks of those establishing madrasas as an alternative to the traditionalist pesantren (Steenbrink 1986).

Another influence on the reform of Islamic education was the growth of Dutch schools for the native population. The first schools were established in big cities like Batavia (now Jakarta) and Semarang in Central Java. The Dutch schools received their warmest reception, however, in West Sumatra, a part of the country well known for its cultural and economic dynamism. For much of the twentieth century, West Sumatran schools produced a disproportionately large proportion of Indonesia's intellectual and business elite (Niel 1984, 46–72).

In response to these developments, Abdullah Ahmad (1878–1933), one of West Sumatra's most prominent Muslim modernists, established the Adabiyah School in Padang, West Sumatra in 1909. Ahmad also published *al-Munir* (1911–16)—the first journal on Islamic reform in Indonesia (Azra 1999b, 92–7). Both initiatives were undertaken in the hope of disseminating new ideas of Islamic reform in West Sumatra. Tellingly, Ahmad's school was not modeled on the Middle Eastern madrasa, but on the Dutch general school into which Islamic subjects were added (Noer 1985, 51–2). This remained the pattern for several later schools, including the Diniyah School in Padang Panjang, built by Zainuddin Labai al-Yunusi (1890–1924) in 1915, and Mahmud Yunus's (1899–1982) Diniyah School in Batusangkar, founded in 1918 (Daya 1990, 83–4).

However, other West Sumatran schools, such as the famous Sumatra Thawalib, preserved elements from West Sumatra's traditionalist surau,

while also adopting classrooms, blackboards, graded classes, and general educational subjects (Azra 2003; Yunus 1977, 73). The Thawalib grew out of a student discussion group at the Surau Jembatan Besi which came together under the direction of the famous Haji Rasul. The members of this group eventually joined with others to form an educational federation called the Sumatra Thawalib, which became a motor for educational reform in Sumatra (Abdullah 1971, 36; Daya 1990, 91–2). Elsewhere, graduates of Egypt's al-Azhar university led the way in the introduction of reformed Islamic schools. Most of the schools founded by al-Azhar graduates were called madrasas; their curriculum included sciences, history, and foreign language study in addition to religious study.

Home to half of Indonesia's Muslims, Java was the second region in the Dutch Indies to pioneer the reform of Islamic education. The effort here was led by the Muhammadiyah, a modernist Islamic organization founded in 1912 in the south-central Javanese town of Yogyakarta (Ali 1958; Nakamura 1983). The Muhammadiyah was established by a local businessman and religious scholar, Kyai Hajji Ahmad Dachlan (1869–1923). Dachlan had earlier spent two periods of study in Mecca, where he was exposed to Cairene ideals of religious and political renewal. A gentle scholar known for his refinement and moderation, Dachlan eschewed mass-based politics in favor of a message of religious renewal that stressed the self-sufficiency of scripture, the moral and intellectual responsibility of individual believers, and the need to accommodate Islamic learning to modern science and education (Alfian 1989, 136–51; Noer 1985, 86).

Much like West Sumatra's reformists, Dachlan believed that education was the motor for religious renewal and social progress (kemajuan; see Hamka 1958, 91). Dachlan blamed the backwardness of Javanese Muslims on, among other things, the traditionalist education provided by pesantrens, which he condemned as narrow and backward-looking. The schools that Dachlan founded were modeled on the people's schools introduced by the Dutch, as well as on the Christian mission schools that had been active in central Java since the late nineteenth century. From the mid-1920s on, Muhammadiyah schools spread rapidly across Indonesia. In 1932, the organization had 316 schools in Java and neighboring Madura islands (Alfian 1989, 189).

The efforts at reforming Islamic education soon affected even traditionalist pesantrens, long a target of modernist criticism. While maintaining their core curriculum in the Islamic sciences, several Javanese pesantrens in the 1920s began to incorporate elements of the madrasa's management and curriculum into their programs. Several pesantrens even established madrasas to provide general education alongside the religious sciences emphasized in pesantrens. The experience of the Tebuireng pesantren in

East Java is illustrative in this regard. The pesantren was built by one of the twentieth century's most famous Javanese 'ulama, Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari (1871–1947). Tebuireng became a model for other pesantrens in Java, because many were built by former students of Asy'ari who implemented similar curricular and pedagogical reforms (Dhofier 1999, 77–115). With the establishment of the traditionalist organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in 1926, Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari gained a central position among Indonesia's traditionalist 'ulama. Still today he is referred to as the Hadratus Syekh (master teacher) among Javanese 'ulama (Dhofier 1999, 78).

In the 1930s, the wave of reform in Javanese pesantrens gained momentum, as more and more institutions developed six-year madrasa programs alongside their instruction in the Islamic sciences. Pesantrens also began to introduce general subjects into their curricula, including Dutch language, history, geography, and mathematics (Dhofier 1999, 104). At the Pesantren Tebuireng this process accelerated under Hasyim Asy'ari's son, Wahid Hasyim (1914–53, Dhofier 1999, 84–6). Similar efforts were undertaken at Java's other leading pesantrens. Among the most influential reforms took place at the Pesantren Krapyak in Yogyakarta under Kyai Ali Maksum (1915–89; see Arief 2003, 69–92), and Pesantren Tambak Beras and Rejoso in Jombang, East Java, under the leadership of Kyai Hasbullah and Kyai Tamim respectively (Yunus 1977, 246–8).

With these and other changes in their curriculum, the objectives of pesantren education changed as well. As Zamakhsyari Dhofier has observed, pesantrens were no longer just concerned with training learned religious scholars, but also aimed to develop ordinary Muslims capable of understanding Islam, science, and the professions (1999, 95). Today only a small percentage of pesantrens limit themselves to training in the Islamic sciences. Consistent with their expanded mission, many pesantrens also operate grassroots economic programs, including cooperatives, credit unions, and health centers. These and other changes have allowed pesantrens to flourish despite the greater competition of today's Islamic educational market.

State Efforts at Islamic Educational Reform

During the early years of Indonesian independence, the nationalist-dominated government explored the possibility of placing Islamic schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture, rather than the Ministry of Religion. Muslim leaders rejected the government's proposals, fearing that the (at that time) secularist-dominated Ministry of Education would not adequately defend Muslim interests. In the 1950s, the Muslim public's interest in religious instruction stimulated

a continuing expansion of Islamic schooling (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 83; PPIM 2004, 20). At the same time, however, parents' realization that education was a path to economic success created pressures for pesantrens and madrasas to incorporate more general education into their curricula. In this manner, socioeconomic change and parental demand combined to diminish educational dualism, as Islamic schools adopted general educational materials.

Although the state in the early period failed to integrate madrasas or pesantrens into the national education system, the Ministry of Religion provided a small subsidy to some Islamic schools, although much less than that the Ministry of Education provided general schools. Through the Law on Education (*Undang Undang Pokok Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*) no. 4, 1950, the state also recognized the degrees granted by madrasas, although it did not make them equivalent to those received by students who graduated from general schools.

The effort to modernize madrasas and pesantrens accelerated in the 1970s with the appointment of Dr. Mukti Ali to the post of Minister of Religious Affairs. A modernist scholar of broad outlook, Ali was a graduate of McGill University in Canada and had worked as a professor at the State Islamic Institute in Yogyakarta. During his tenure as minister, he launched a series of initiatives designed to integrate Islamic institutions into the national education system. In 1975, the signing of the "Agreement of the Three Ministers" (*SKB Tiga Menteri*) by the Ministers of Religious Affairs, National Education, and Internal Affairs paved the way for making madrasa degrees educationally equivalent to those awarded by general schools. As a result of this reform, madrasa graduates were given the right to continue their studies in general institutions of higher learning. Conversely, students from general schools were allowed to study at madrasas and Islamic institutions of higher learning.

For degree-bearing graduates to qualify for these equivalences, they had to graduate from schools in which the curriculum had been revised to accommodate 70 percent general studies along side 30 percent in the Islamic religious sciences. Equally significant, to guarantee that their students were competitive for admission to institutions of higher learning, madrasas were expected to use textbooks similar to those used in general schools, prepared and published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The government made clear at this time that it was not trying to abolish centers of advanced instruction in the Islamic sciences. It allowed a small number of senior secondary schools, known simply as "special-program senior high madrasas" (*madrasa aliyah negeri-program khusus*, see Meuleman and Chambert-Loir 1997, 200) to continue to devote a greater proportion of their curriculum to religious studies. However, by requiring madrasas to apply for this title, the government stimulated a

competition whereby only a handful of institutions with quality instruction were awarded the status.

In 1989, the government enacted a new law on National Education System (UUSPN). This law effectively identified madrasas and Islamic schools generally as a subsystem of the national educational system. One consequence of this reform was that madrasas and pesantrens were also required to participate in the government's effort to make education compulsory for nine years. The law also tightened the regulations (first enacted in the late 1960s) stipulating that religious instruction is compulsory at all class levels in general schools.

The effect of the 1989 regulation was to redefine the madrasa as a general school with an Islamic identity. Having been made a general school, the madrasa curriculum had to conform to guidelines specified by the Ministry of National Education. At the same time, however, the Ministry of Religious Affairs was allowed to develop curricular materials that convey an "Islamic perspective" even as they conform to the Education Ministry's guidelines. In an effort to develop these materials, the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) has expanded its curriculum to include teaching in the sciences.

Why have Indonesia's Muslim educators been so willing to go along with the government's curricular reforms? Several factors appear to have been decisive. First, as noted above, reformist Muslims had shown an interest in implementing curricular reforms since the first decades of the twentieth century. Second, the success of these early efforts allayed Muslim fears that Islamic and general education were antithetical. Third, since the early twentieth century, and in contrast with some Muslim countries, pious Muslims embraced the project of Indonesian nation-building as their own. With the exception of a rejectionist fringe, most Muslim leaders agreed with the programs of nation-building and general educational reform promoted by Indonesia's leaders.

Fourth, the acceptance of educational reforms also reflected the long-held hope among Muslim educators that, even as Islamic education was maintained, its quality could be elevated to a standing equivalent to that of general schools. The final transformation of madrasas implemented through the National Law on Education of 1989 (and then amended by the National Law on Education of 2004) seemed to fulfill just this hope. As a result, three years after the implementation of the Ministry of Education's 1994 Regulation on National Curricula, graduates of senior secondary madrasas were able to continue their education not only to state Islamic colleges (IAIN, STAINs, or UIN) but to general universities as well. Today madrasa graduates can even enroll in military and police academies, something unimaginable in the past.

The Transformative Role of Muslim Higher Education

As these last examples show, another influence on the reform of Islamic education in Indonesia has been that over the course of the twentieth century both madrasas and pesantrens developed informal ties to institutions of higher education. These linkages paved the way for what was to become in fact if not in formal principle an integrated national educational system, with program equivalences and student circulation between madrasas and general schools.

The effort to create a system of Islamic higher education began in the final years of the colonial period, when Muslim leaders in Jakarta and West Sumatra attempted to establish small institutes of higher education. Both initiatives collapsed, but they created a precedent for efforts to come. Those involved in these early efforts were not anti-Western Islamists, but reformers comfortable with Western traditions of knowledge, and convinced that their methods and message were consistent with Islam.

A more ambitious effort to establish an Islamic university began in the weeks prior to the declaration of Indonesian independence in 1945, culminating in the establishment in April 1946 of Indonesia's first-ever Islamic university, the Sekolah Tinggi Islam (STI, Islamic School of Higher Learning) in Yogyakarta. The STI was renamed the Universitas Islam Indonesia in March 1948, and survives to this day. One of the primary supporters of the STI initiative was Mohammad Hatta, an observant Muslim, social democrat, and first vice president of Indonesia. Hatta called for the new Islamic university to adopt an "inclusive" attitude toward Islamic education. For Hatta, this meant that the school should draw on general philosophy, history, and sociology to deepen and renew Muslims' understanding of their religion. Hatta decried what he called the "narrow" views of some Muslims, and took a swipe at conservative Islamists when he insisted that if religious law was to be made meaningful it had to be understood in a contextual and "empirical" manner (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 6–8; Rose 1987). Hatta's comments illustrate that the ideas of pluralism and open-mindedness emphasized in the state Islamic university system today build on strong historical precedents.

Notwithstanding the hopes of Muslim leaders, government support to Islamic higher education during the first years of independence was minimal. It was only after 1960 that the government authorized the establishment of a nation-wide system of State Islamic Institutes (IAIN). The first institute was created by linking two preexisting faculties in Jakarta and Yogyakarta. Over the next ten years, Muslim leaders and government officials in population centers across the country established a number of smaller faculties. Most were underfinanced, understaffed, and poorly

administered. By 1973, there were some 112 IAIN campuses, most of which consisted of a simple building offering courses by underpaid and underqualified staff (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 17).

Under the leadership of Minister Mukti Ali, in 1975 the Ministry of Religion undertook an ambitious modernization of the IAIN system. The Ministry began by reducing the number of IAIN from 113 to 13.[9] It also initiated a program of faculty enhancement that sent senior officials from the IAIN and the Ministry of Religion to universities in Canada, the United States, and Western Europe. The program was eventually anchored on a special relationship developed between the IAIN and the program in Islamic studies at McGill University in Canada, where Minister Ali had been a graduate student in the 1960s. By 2001, 99 IAIN instructors had studied at McGill; 12 had received their Ph.D (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 26). Upon returning to Indonesia, these Western-educated scholars were appointed to key administrative positions in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the IAIN, in an effort to modernize and de-ideologize the state Islamic educational system.

At the center of the state's reform efforts was a program similar to that which the government had undertaken with pesantrens and madrasas. The Ministry of Religious Affairs sought to open the teaching of the classical Islamic sciences to historical and contextualizing methodologies. Today, every student admitted to the state Islamic university system is required to fulfill divisional studies requirements that begin with courses on Islamic history and contextualizing methodologies for the study of Islam. Unlike the instruction students receive in most pesantrens, the IAIN curriculum is not limited to any single legal tradition (madhhab) or conventional Islamic sciences. Equally important, since 2003, students in the IAIN system are required to take a basic course on democracy, civil society, and human rights, including women's rights. The curriculum for this program was developed from 1999 to 2002 in collaboration with the Jakarta office of the Asia Foundation. The civic education program proved so successful that it was eventually adopted, not only by the state Islamic universities, but by the Muhammadiyah university system.

Today there are fourteen IAINs across Indonesia, and thirty-four STAINs. In addition, there are four full-fledged Islamic Universities (UIN, or Universitas Islam Negeri). The conversion of IAIN Jakarta into UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2002, followed by IAIN Yogyakarta, STAIN Malang, and IAIN Pekanbaru in 2004, represents another step in the transformation of Islamic education in Indonesia. With the creation of the UINs, Islamic universities now have faculties not only in Islamic sciences, but in disciplines like economics, psychology, and medicine. The self-professed aims of the faculty expansion are, first, to integrate the Islamic sciences with general sciences; and, second, to provide graduates of

all the four divisions of Madrasa Aliyah with study programs that are in accord with their educational specialization (Kusmana and Munadi 2002; UIN 2005; Yatim and Nasuhi 2002).

Through these and other measures, the IAIN and the National Islamic Universities aim to act as cultural brokers between, on one hand, a modernized and pluralistic educational system and Indonesia's forty thousand-plus Islamic schools. The directors of the state Islamic universities feel confident that they can play this role because the IAIN remain the preferred avenue of higher education for graduates of madrasas and pesantrens. Moreover, because of similarities between the IAIN curriculum and pesantrens, graduates of pesantrens have always found it easier to gain admission to the IAIN than to the state-run general university system. Pesantren graduates do well on the IAIN exam because of their greater fluency in Arabic and greater familiarity with the Islamic sciences.

A 1999 survey of 130 leading pesantrens in 27 Indonesian provinces illustrates just how the IAIN system is impacting staffing levels in pesantrens. Prior to the expansion of the IAIN system in the late 1960s, few teachers at pesantrens had any experience in state-supported higher education. Most had acquired their educational credentials through a process of personalized instruction at pesantrens. A smaller number might have gone on for advanced educational study in Egypt or Saudi Arabia. Whether in Indonesian pesantrens or in the Middle East, few if any of these scholars were likely to have been exposed to academic methodologies for the historical, sociological, or contextual study of religion and law, like those now provided at the IAIN.

The 1999 study shows how the profile of educators in leading pesantrens is changing as a result of the growth of the IAIN system. Among pesantren directors surveyed in the study, 20.8 percent are graduates of the IAIN; 27.7 percent are graduates of state-sponsored secondary religious education, typically either Schools for Religious Teachers (Pendidikan Guru Agama) or senior secondary schools (madrasa aliyah). Study in Middle Eastern settings is still a significant part of the educational program of senior scholars: 11.5 percent of school directors are graduates of Egypt's al-Azhar university; another 11.5 percent have graduated from schools of higher religious education in Mecca or Medina.

At the next level in the pesantren teaching hierarchy, among instructors (ustadz), the impact of IAIN or state secondary higher education is even stronger. A full 36.1 percent of the teachers have graduated from the IAIN; 25.9 percent have graduated from state-supported secondary religious programs. Only 3.5 percent of the teachers have studied at al-Azhar; while 6.45 percent have studied in Saudi Arabia (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 112–3). These data suggest that there is a significant shift taking

place in the educational training of pesantren teachers, away from Middle Eastern education and toward the state Islamic educational system.

Is the impact of this shift likely to be as profound as many of the leading administrators in the IAIN system and the Ministry of Religion hope? The editors of the 2002 report cited above on the "IAIN and the Modernization of Islam in Indonesia" are optimistic about the pluralizing influence of the IAIN:

> The large number of IAIN alumni who go on to become *kyai* or religious teachers in pesantren certainly gives rise to the hope that they will bring with them a new Islamic culture that is modern, contextual, liberal, and rational, like that which is being developed in the IAIN. . . . With the model of understanding developed at the IAIN, Muslim Indonesians, who of course represent the majority of Indonesians, will be educated so as to be able to understand the important meaning of modernity, progress (the idea of progress), societal pluralism, and tolerance toward people who profess other religions. (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 114).

The precise impact of IAIN programs on the broader Islamic educational system, however, remains complex. The authors of the above-cited book themselves note that "the local interpretation" of IAIN programs varies from region to region. Strongholds of traditionalist Islam like East Java and south Kalimantan tend to view the IAIN's emphasis on "rational" and contextual approaches to Islamic knowledge with deep suspicion. Islamist conservatives affiliated with small political parties have also been highly critical of IAIN programs. A book published in March 2005, *Ada Pemurtadan di IAIN* [There's Apostasy in the IAIN], is but one of many publications that have alleged that the IAIN is deviating from Islamic doctrine.[10]

For the most part, however, these criticisms have had little impact on the IAIN's mission. Parents and students at Islamic madrasas and colleges have responded enthusiastically to the expansion of the educational curriculum, recognizing its vocational and employment benefits. Although viewed with ambivalence by some in the non-Muslim community, the extension of religious education into public schools has further diminished the educational dualism that once characterized the system as a whole.

Conclusion

With its more than 10,000 Islamic boarding schools, pesantrens, 37,000 madrasas, and 5.7 million madrasa students, Indonesia has one of the largest Islamic educational systems in the world. Although the state provides small subsidies to many schools, the bulk of the system is commu-

nity-financed and privately managed. Despite the relative autonomy of the Islamic educational system as a whole, Muslim educators and state officials have achieved what is arguably one of the most effective collaborations in the Muslim world. Through negotiation and compromise, most private and all state-operated Islamic schools have come to welcome the incorporation of general and professional education into their curriculum. In most schools the percentage of general educational instruction is today around 70 percent. The flagships of the Islamic educational system, the state-supported National Islamic Universities (UIN), and the State Islamic Institutes (IAIN) have reinforced this reformist synergy, funneling large numbers of teachers familiar with pragmatic and contextual interpretations of Islam into the private Islamic school system. The state Islamic system has even pioneered programs designed to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam with democracy and civic pluralism.

These programs have not been sufficient to prevent the emergence of a small number of Islamic schools committed to radical political ideals (Azra 2004a; Hefner 2005). Notwithstanding the notoriety of these leaders in the global media, however, their schools are a miniuscule proportion of the whole. Moreover, one striking indication of the success of government and educators' collaboration is the fact that even madrasas operated by Muslim scholars of radical persuasion, such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's al-Mukmin school outside of Solo, Central Java, accept the government's curricular guidelines. The madrasa housed in the Ngruki pesantren does indeed instruct its students that they should refuse all forms of government except an Islamic state, that they must not defend Indonesia as long as it is not based on Islamic law, and that democracy is a form of polytheism (shirk, see Jamhari and Jahroni 2004, 61–2). Remarkably, however, the teachers accept the Ministry of Religion and Ministry of Education's guidelines on general education. A significant number of Ngruki graduates go on to enroll at mainstream institutions of higher education, most of them in nonreligious faculties.

One of the sociocultural influences that has most contributed to Indonesia's educational reformation has to do with parental demand. In choosing a school for their children, middle- and upper-class parents, among whom Islamic schools have recently become popular, place near-equal emphasis on general-educational and religious instruction. Quality concerns may be a bit less salient among poor and lower-class parents, but interviews for this project indicated that even for them the practical benefits of education are important. Parents expect education to be a vehicle for social and economic mobility; they steer clear of schools that do not provide those skills. Performance-based assessments like these exercise a strong influence on Muslim education as a whole.

What is also striking about Islamic education in Indonesia is that educators' interest in general education is not a recent phenomenon. In Indonesia's two great laboratories of Islamic reform, West Sumatra and central Java, Muslim scholars—some with impressive educational training in the Middle East—moved in the early 1910s to establish modern madrasas and even more progress-minded Islamic schools. These schools spread rapidly across Indonesia, and became the preferred educational venue for a growing middle class.

There is an even more striking feature to this development. It is that as Indonesian Muslims moved into the modern era, growing numbers chose to make the passage in the company of mass-based religious associations that put education and welfare above étatist politics (Abdullah 2001; see also chapter 1). Public participation in religious associations has, of course, been a prominent feature of urban life for Muslims around the twentieth-century world (Clark 2004). The phenomenon is not unique to Indonesia. But the scale of the phenomenon in Indonesia is breathtaking. No Muslim society has Islamic welfare organizations as large or as well-established as Indonesia's Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama.

What is equally distinctive when it comes to Indonesia is that several of the larger Muslim associations, especially the Muhammadiyah, remained true to their educational mission even in the heat of national politics. Founded in 1912 as an organization dedicated to education, social service, and modernist reform, the Muhammadiyah allowed its members to participate in party politics. But members were required to pursue those interests through associational bodies other than the Muhammadiyah. The Muhammadiyah never developed a secret operations bureau, as Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood did, and never trained its members to believe that the seizure of state was its primary mission. Against the backdrop of Indonesia's tumultuous history, the consistency of Muhammadiyah's civic tack is remarkable. The organization's efforts also reminded the leadership of other Muslim associations of the importance of education.

The final historical fact that must be emphasized in any effort to understand the openness and dynamism of Islamic education in Indonesia is that Muslim Indonesians created many diverse school traditions, as well as diverse political associations. Faced with this diversity of ideals and organizations, the leaders of Indonesia's most influential associations made it a virtue of a necessity and dedicated themselves to civil and educational matters rather than a statist politics on whose form they could not fully agree. They did this in large part because, more than their counterparts in some Muslim countries, the mainstream Muslim leadership identified the ideals of Indonesian nationhood as their own. Some Muslim leaders might have wished that the country would formally incorporate Islamic law into Indonesia's constitution and legal system. But they also

recognized that many other Indonesians, including many observant Muslim Indonesians, did not.

Faced with the challenge of managing their own doctrinal and organizational differences, the most influential leaders in Muslim Indonesia concluded that modern education, constitutionalism, and the rule of law were not merely the stuff of Westernizing secularists, but were political instruments fully compatible with Muslim ideals (Abdillah 1997, 66–79; Hefner 2000). As with politics in this vast country, Muslim education developed a tradition of openness and innovation because most Muslims were convinced that the pluralist ideals of Indonesian nationhood are compatible with Islam. Although today a small minority of conservative activists might wish otherwise, this legacy of political and educational pragmatism seems likely to exercise a strong influence on Muslim culture and politics for many years to come.

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Notes

1. In addition to published materials, this chapter draws on the Indonesian authors' many years of research on Islamic education; and the American author's visits to Islamic schools in Jakarta, West Java, and Central Java during January 2005, as well as 200 taped and transcribed interviews carried out during summers from 1999 to 2004 in Jakarta, Makassar, and Yogyakarta.

2. The precise origin of the Javanese pesantren is a matter of historical dispute. Some scholars see the institution's origin in the Hindu-Buddhist *mandala* monasteries of the fourteenth and fifteenth century and the *tapa* ascetics of the seventeenth, but others see it as a uniquely Islamic institution that appeared in Java and Malay-speaking portions of Southeast Asia in the sixteenth century. See Lombard 1990, 114; Prabowo and Guillot 1997, 184; Reid 1993, 178–9.

3. One of Indonesia's largest and most modern pesantren, the Ma'had al-Zaytun in Indramayu, West Java currently has facilities for seven thousand male and female students, and has a building campaign to accommodate eighteen thousand more. When completed, its main mosque will be capable of accommodating fifty thousand worshippers.

4. In recent years, the strengthening of cultural ties between Southeast Asia and the Middle East has been the focus of extraordinary historical research and deserves special mention here. Among the many fine studies see Azra (1999a; 2004b), Dhofier (1999), Freitag and Clarence-Smith (1997), Hooker (2003), Laffan (2003), and Riddell (2001). For an earlier but still important treatment, see Lombard (1990).

5. Since 2002, the State Islamic Institutes (IAIN) in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Malang, and Pekanbaru have been elevated to the status of research universities by the government, and are in the process of opening faculties of general education in medicine, education, and the social sciences. The development of these "centers of educational excellence," as the government describes them, is intended to diminish the dualism of Islamic and general learning even further.

6. According to a Department of Religion study, in 1999, 27.7 percent of pesantrens had opened madrasas (Jabali and Jamhari 2002, 10). In an informal survey of 80 large pesantren visited by Robert Hefner in collaboration with staff from the National Islamic University, the figure soared to 60 percent.

7. The phrase is Jonathan Berkey's. See Berkey 1992 and this volume.

8. We lack sufficient data on enrollment by gender in pesantrens to say with certainty that this trend also applies to these institutions. Anecdotal observation by the authors suggests that male enrollments are greater than female at the more senior levels of pesantren instruction.

9. Today there are 14 IAIN, of which four have been transformed into research universities with faculties or departments in medicine, law, the social sciences, comparative religion, and other fields in addition to Islamic sciences. There are also thirty-two second-tier state-Islamic colleges, known by their acronym, STAIN (*Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri)*. These have a smaller number of departments, fewer faculties, and a less extensively upgraded teaching staff.

10. The author of the booklet is a well-known polemicist against moderate and liberal Muslims. For a conservative Islamist viewpoint on IAIN "apostasy," see Jafar 2005; for a liberal Islamic response to the accusation, see Ghazali 2005.

CHAPTER 9

The Transformation of Muslim Schooling in Mali: The Madrasa as an Institution of Social and Religious Mediation

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In Mali the term madrasa, or médersa as it is known in local French usage, has a very specific meaning that reflects much about the history of the institution in the country. Madrasa denotes a Muslim primary school that offers a combined secular and Islamic studies curriculum and employs "modernized" pedagogical methods. The first madrasas appeared in the 1940s when Mali was still the French colony of Soudan Français. Two of these initial schools were tiny, semirural institutions that could barely be distinguished from local Qur'anic schools, except by the pedagogical aims of their founders, which included the introduction of a formalized and modernized curriculum and the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language. The third, which was eventually authorized to open in Bamako, was a much larger institution that counted its students in the hundreds within a year of its inception. During the 1950s, about ten additional madrasas were opened, and by the 1980s approximately 25 percent of primary-age school children who were attending school in Mali were enrolled in madrasa-type institutions.

This rapid growth in madrasa enrollment can be attributed to various causes, among them the desire on the part of many Muslim parents for their children to receive a religious education more adapted to contemporary conditions, combined with the widespread feeling that the secular state schools turned children into "unbelievers." But the very limited access to state schools was also a factor, especially in a city like Bamako.

Although the madrasas that were founded during this period of rapid expansion differed considerably from one another in many aspects (size, facilities, the form and breadth of curriculum offered), they also shared several basic characteristics. Most significantly, perhaps, they were all the result of efforts to reform or modernize classical methods of Muslim schooling. And they were all private, fee-paying, primary schools, offering at most nine years of schooling; before the 1990s there were no madrasas offering secondary or higher level education.

In the public consciousness, the madrasa is perceived as an institution that contrasts both to the Qur'anic school, which is devoted entirely to the study of Islamic texts, and to the state school, which is devoted entirely to secular subjects and from which the study of religion is expressly excluded. However, the madrasa is something of an eclectic mix of elements drawn from these other two types of schools; although they evolved as an alternative to these schools, the madrasas have also been influenced by them. This has been due to a combination of social pressure for the madrasas to prepare students for integration into the modern political economy, and sustained government efforts to control these privately funded schools.

This chapter will explore the social and political dynamics, and some of the implications, of the growth of the madrasa network of schools in Mali.

Historical Overview

The evolution of the madrasa network of schools in Mali occurred in the context of the social, political, and economic changes that were set in motion during the French colonial period in West Africa. The French pursued an "official" policy of secularism in public affairs, in accordance with which they proclaimed that religion was a private matter in which the state was not to intervene except in case of a threat to public order. In reality, however, Islam and Muslim affairs were very near the top of the French political agenda throughout the colonial period. French Islamic policy was driven primarily by the fear, shared by many in responsible and influential positions, that the most likely threat to French colonial hegemony would arise from an Islamically inspired political movement. Consequently, the French persistently intervened in Muslim affairs from the beginning of their colonial occupation. Paradoxically the French presence created conditions that stimulated a process of rapid Islamization in the region, especially in the burgeoning urban centers of the colony. Whereas Islam was the religion of only a minority of the population at the beginning of the century (albeit a substantial minority), by the 1990s, almost 80 percent claimed to be Muslim. The expansion of madrasa schooling was closely associated with this process of Islamization.

One of the first French interventions in Muslim affairs was in the field of schooling. During the first decades of the twentieth century, they set up what they called médersas in several major Muslim centers, including Timbuktu and Jenne in Soudan Français (later Mali). These schools, based on models developed in Algeria, offered a religious studies curriculum that infused the study of Islam with a bias that was patently intended to serve French political interests (Brenner 2000, 41ff.).

In themselves, the social impact of these French médersas was negligible, but the French initiative in establishing them is nonetheless illustrative of the political manipulation to which all schooling in Mali has been subjected since the beginning of the colonial period. The first secular French-language schools that were established by the French were intended to produce lower level colonial administrators, but their curricula were developed in the firm and sincere belief that knowledge of the French language would turn the products of these schools into loyal colonial subjects. In fact, what it turned many of the students into was the vanguard of the independence movement. Thus began the politicization of the student population. The first independent (Marxist) government of Mali also used students for their own political aims, enlisting them to spread party thinking and to enforce party policies. Since that time, students have been involved in almost all popular political action in Mali.

The birth and expansion of the network of the Muslim madrasa schools in Mali must be understood in this broader context of change and of the general expansion of formal schooling in the country. Muslim institutions, like all social institutions in Africa during the past century, have experienced a process of profound transformation as Muslims struggled to come to terms with the changing social and political environment. Perhaps the most significant of these institutional transformations was the appearance of the Muslim voluntary associations, which from the early twentieth century evolved into the most prevalent and effective vehicles for Muslims seeking to organize themselves as a presence in the public sphere, both culturally and politically.

These new voluntary associations were themselves closely associated with the process of formal schooling, both in their inspiration and in their aims. For example, virtually all the earliest Muslim voluntary associations, such as the Union Culturelle Musulmane, which had branches throughout French West Africa, and the various Muslim youth organizations that appeared in different colonies, were concerned with the provision of modernized Muslim schooling. Many of these associations were founded by young persons who had been schooled, at least in part, in colonial French-language schools. Others, like the Shubban al-muslimin youth association in Soudan Français, were founded by young men who had studied in Egypt or Saudi Arabia (Kaba 1974). Some associations pursued a broad program of activities, of which Muslim schooling constituted only one part. Others, like Shubban al-muslimin, were founded specifically to establish and administer new schools. But no matter to what extent the new Muslim associations differed from one to another in their primary objectives, or their doctrinal orientation, insofar as they addressed questions of schooling, they were all committed to the reform of Muslim schooling so as to make it more relevant to contemporary conditions.

This commitment to the reform of Muslim schooling was shared by all those who founded madrasas, whether under the aegis of an association or as individuals. But the appearance of this new form of schooling aroused immediate conflict with many teachers and other advocates of the Qur'anic school and *majlis*, as the local centers of advanced Islamic study were known. They felt threatened by the new institutions, and not without reason, since many of the founders of the new schools were openly and harshly critical of the classical forms of schooling. And, indeed, nowhere is the innovative nature of the madrasa as a response to social change in Mali more evident than in comparing its structure and pedagogy with that which prevailed in the Qur'anic schools.

But the founders of the new madrasas also had to respond to opposition on another more imposing front, from both colonial and subsequent independent governments. After initial attempts to suppress the madrasas had failed, the official position toward them lapsed into what one might call "malign neglect"—when they were not being ignored, they were being maligned. Until the late 1980s, successive independent governments followed the French precedent of not recognizing the madrasas as legally constituted "teaching institutions"; officially they were classified as "Qur'anic schools." As such, they did not qualify for government subsidy, a position justified by prevailing secularist policies. These same policies did not, however, prevent subsidies being granted to local Catholic schools, which were recognized as "teaching institutions."

Nor was this the only contradiction produced by this situation. In their efforts to have their school formally recognized, the founders of the first Bamako madrasa carefully modeled their curriculum on that of the French controlled Timbuktu médersa. After long delays, the madrasa curriculum was accepted and the school was allowed to open, only to be closed within months due to violent demonstrations in the city, which many felt were instigated by the French authorities (Kaba 1974; Brenner 2000). In fact, the authorities were not prepared to allow Muslims autonomy in teaching, especially if they were intending to combine Islamic studies with secular ones.

The evolution of the madrasa movement in Mali, and the political stratagems and tactics that accompanied it, have been extremely complex, and no single-factor analysis could possibly do justice to explaining it. However, much of the tension that has accompanied this process has resulted from the confrontation between the fervently secular policies of both French and independent governments and the quest by many Muslims for social integration "as Muslims" into the evolving new sociopolitical order. At the very least, Muslims of this persuasion were determined that the new order should formally recognize and respect Muslim values and sensibilities. But successive governments seemed to be deaf to these

voices of moderate ambition, hearing and responding only to the strident voices of a more militant Muslim minority and in response to whom they formulated their attitudes and policies. The reform of Muslim schooling in the form of madrasas was a major focal point of these social and political tensions.

From Qur'anic School and Majlis to Madrasa

This process of transformation has been informed by varying influences and has involved many different initiatives and experiments, which we cannot here explore in detail. We begin our analysis with a generalized comparison between the two forms of Muslim schooling, which will give the reader an idea of the kinds of changes that have been taking place, before we move on to the forces that have generated these changes (Brenner 2000; Cissé 1992).

As already suggested, the initial impetus for the founding of madrasas in Mali was to "modernize" classical forms of Muslim schooling in order to make them more relevant to contemporary conditions. But this movement toward reform did not involve any systematic or direct intervention in existing Qur'anic and majlis schools. Rather the madrasas evolved in parallel to the existing network of classical Muslim schools and as an alternative to them. And despite their success, the madrasas have not fully replaced the Qur'anic and majlis schools, which continue to flourish in various parts of Mali, especially in rural areas. No reliable statistics exist either for the number of these schools or for the size of their enrollments, but such schools continue to serve the religious schooling needs of many families and their children.

We will explore some specific aspects and implications of madrasa reform below, but generally it can be said that structurally the madrasas have sought to combine two separate stages of classical Muslim schooling into a single institution. Virtually all Muslim children in the past attended Qur'anic schools where most of them learned to recite at least some verses of the Qur'an and where they learned the fundamentals of their religion. A minority of these students might continue their schooling until they are able to recite the entire Qur'an, and a still smaller minority might continue their studies in a majlis, where they would study selected texts of the Muslim religious sciences. Majlis studies began with elementary books, usually in *tawhid* and fiqh, and depending on the student could continue for many years to include major Islamic texts. It was only in the majlis that the Arabic language was taught systematically.

The madrasas in Mali have never offered studies that compare with the advanced levels of the majlis. In the early years of its development, ma-

drasa schooling was primarily an urban phenomenon that provided at most nine years of school. Students could pursue secondary and higher studies only by going abroad. In effect, madrasa reform in Mali has focused primarily on elementary Muslim schooling.

Pedagogical Changes

The most visible difference between a Qur'anic school and a madrasa in Mali is to be found in the physical spaces and structures they occupy. The Qur'anic school (as well as the majlis) is normally located in the home compound of the teacher. Both students and teacher sit on mats on the ground, and the number of pupils "enrolled" is usually relatively small, although quite large Qur'anic schools are not unknown. By contrast, a madrasa usually consists of purpose-built classrooms in which pupils sit at desks and teachers preside from the front of the room and employ such aids as a blackboard.

These spatial differences reflect important differences in pedagogical philosophy and practice. The Qur'anic school and majlis place their primary pedagogical emphasis on individualized instruction, so that each student is allowed to progress at his or (much less often) her own rate. This personalized, tutorial approach to teaching enables an effective teacher to identify and to respond to the needs and the abilities of individual students, and to assist the best and the brightest to advance in their studies at a very rapid rate. This approach to teaching could be very effective in identifying and promoting young talent, and it is worth noting that the intellectual ability and promise of virtually all the most renowned Islamic scholars in this region in recent centuries is recorded as having been recognized in their youth.

By contrast, the madrasas in Mali, although modeled on madrasas in the Middle East, have also been very influenced by contemporary demands for mass schooling. The madrasas therefore offer a structured curriculum that is designed to teach large numbers of students who are expected to progress at the same rate through graded stages, all examined by increasingly standardized examinations.

This movement toward "mass" and standardized religious schooling of course affects many aspects of the pedagogical environment. Most of the children who attend Qur'anic schools achieve only a partial reading of the Qur'an. Those who complete a full reading or even memorization of the Qur'an might then enter a majlis, where they begin the "reading" of specific books in the fields of tawhid, fiqh and hadith, in a set sequence and under the personal supervision of one or more teachers. The student progresses through his studies at his own pace. In the madrasas, each

school day is organized according to a timetable that assigns a fixed amount of time to each subject taught. Thus religious studies subjects such as tawhid or fiqh, as well as the Qur'an, are taught for a set amount of time each week, and they share time with secular subjects such as math, history, and geography.

In the Qur'anic schools, the pupils write out the sections of the Qur'an that they are reading on wooden slates using home made reed pens and ink. In the madrasas, the pupils are issued textbooks, they produce their homework in notebooks using ball point pens, and as already suggested, their progress is monitored through periodic tests and examinations.

There is also a significant linguistic difference between Qur'anic and madrasa forms of schooling. The language of instruction in the Qur'anic schools is the mother tongue of the pupils. Although children learn to write Arabic from the beginning of their schooling in order to copy out the passages they are reading, they first learn to recite the Qur'an in Arabic without translation. It is only those students who continue their studies to the level of the majlis who are formally taught the Arabic language.

In the madrasas, the language of instruction is, in principle, Arabic, which is taught as a second language from the first year, following the model of the teaching of French in the state schools. This policy has produced an increasingly large number of young people who can read, write, and speak Arabic (Brenner 1993). French language is also taught in many madrasas, since knowledge of French is necessary for most employment in the public sector.

The "Professionalization" of Teaching

These pedagogical innovations have been accompanied by a transformation in the nature, role, and status of teachers in the madrasas. Those who convene Qur'anic or majlis schools are self-selected. Historically no formal controls have ever existed to regulate who might or might not open such a school, although the French made some efforts in this direction during the colonial period. On the other hand, there has long been a system for recognizing the level of competence which an individual has achieved in recitation of the Qur'an, as well as for certifying the completion of the study of individual books. Such a certificate, which is issued by the teacher of a particular book, does not really document any objective standard of achievement, but it does attest to the fact that the recipient has studied the book to a level of competence satisfactory to the teacher who issues it; it also serves as an authorization to teach the book.

Such a system of schooling produces wide variations in the quality and competence of the teaching that is offered, since anyone who feels himself

qualified can teach. But it is also a self-regulating system: parents choose to whom they will send their children for Qur'anic schooling, and advanced students try to attend the majlis of teachers whose scholarly lineage and reputation are well regarded.

But if classical religious schooling lacks a formal system to regulate the quality of teaching, its tutorial approach, based on personal relationships between teacher and student, provides the possibility for a much deeper and broader "education" of the student. Teachers in Qur'anic and majlis schools have often engaged in extended religious studies, and have devoted themselves to the transmission of religious knowledge as a part of their own personal religious commitment, and they can consequently demand the respect of their pupils and students. Parents often entrust not only the religious, but also the moral education of their children to these teachers, who accept both the task of transmitting religious knowledge to their students as well as of inculcating proper religious and social behaviors in them. This process functions on all levels of classical schooling. Advanced students seek out teachers who are recommended by their reputation as scholars but also for their piety. It is through this personal student-teacher relationship that the "religious persona" of a young scholar begins to develop.

Although many of the founders of madrasas, especially in the early years, were classically trained clerics, these schools have expanded so rapidly that most of their teachers are now themselves products of the madrasas. They are often quite young and they have not experienced the kind of education provided by the classical forms of personal tutoring. The personalized moral and spiritual components of the classical student-teacher relationship rarely find a place in the madrasa, where classroom sizes are usually very large and the teacher's role has been reduced to the technical transmission of very specific knowledge and skills. These changes mean that most teachers in the madrasas lack the moral authority of classical religious teachers, and that religious schooling in the madrasas is perceived as something profoundly different from what it is, or formerly was, in the classical system. These changes also account for why some parents still prefer to send their children to Qur'anic schools.

This dramatic "depersonalization" of religious schooling is further enhanced by the fact that teaching in the madrasa is a salaried occupation, which is accompanied by the various administrative tasks and responsibilities that are part of any contemporary institution. Further, there is pressure for teachers in the madrasas to obtain formal teaching qualifications; many of them have had virtually no teacher training at all. In other words, teachers in the madrasas are gradually becoming "professionals," and they are beginning to organize themselves into associations or unions in order to define and protect their own status.

The Economics of Reform

As the preceding discussion about teachers suggests, the shift to madrasa schooling has also been accompanied by significant changes in the economic base upon which religious schooling rests. The establishment of a Qur'anic school or majlis requires no special economic resources because no special facilities or investments are required. Such schooling normally takes place in the home of the teachers, who in the past were usually compensated by the labor of their students, although now they often receive fees in the form of monetary payments.

The madrasas, by contrast, tend to be integrated (or are becoming integrated) into the contemporary cash economy. They are all fee-paying institutions that depend primarily on income derived from fees in order to function; none has been supported by state subventions. Madrasas have been founded and developed in many different circumstances by persons of varying economic means, resulting in schools that range from the most simple of structures to large and well-appointed buildings. But the madrasa is differentiated structurally from the Qur'anic school in that it is usually housed in a purposefully built structure, no matter how simple. Significantly many madrasas have begun as a single classroom and then gradually expanded into a larger school as an additional classroom is added in each subsequent year.

No matter what strategy might have been adopted by the founders of madrasas, virtually all of them require some degree of investment to start up, and often the capital invested has been substantial. Not all the capital is necessarily personal; there are many instances of communities collecting donations to start up and sustain a madrasa. Substantial private donations, both from local as well as foreign donors, have also been provided to assist in the establishment of a new school.

In other words, the founders and directors of madrasas are educational entrepreneurs in a way that the Qur'anic or majlis teacher is not. They must not only address questions of how to raise and employ the basic capital required to start a school, no matter how small, but also manage the finances of the school in order to pay their staff as well as maintain the structures. The larger the school is, the more onerous the managerial burden.

The Sociopolitical Context of Change

This generalized comparison between classical Muslim schools and madrasas provides an outline of the kinds of changes that have been taking place in Muslim schooling in Mali during the past fifty years or so. But it

must be kept in mind that these changes are not the result of a coherent movement; they have evolved in an erratic and uneven pattern, the result of a wide range of uncoordinated initiatives and experiments. It may be correct to assert that all founders of madrasas shared the aim of reforming Muslim schooling so as to make it more relevant to contemporary conditions; but it is also true that the influences and motivations that led them to undertake their experiments varied considerably. These included their experience of new (to them) forms of schooling, either in the madrasas of North Africa and the Middle East or in secular colonial schools, both of which were perceived as employing more efficient pedagogical methods; the related realization that classical forms of Muslim schooling were poorly adapted to prepare young people for the rapidly changing social realities in which they were now living; and the wish to create schools that could compete with the secular French language schools by providing a religiously based schooling that would also prepare Muslim children for employment in the expanding new sectors of the economy.

The Social and Political Impact of Schooling

The origin of many of these influences can be traced, directly or indirectly, to the French colonial presence and the extent to which schooling has been implicated in the establishment and growth of both the colonial and the postcolonial state. All official documentation clearly demonstrates how the French colonial administration viewed the French language school, not in the liberal terms that development agencies speak of it today, but as an instrument for consolidating its political control. The colonial schools were established in order to train Africans for service in the colonial administration, and early colonial educational pronouncements were couched in language about administering and controlling subject populations. School recruitment, which was often imposed by force, focused on enrolling the children of now deposed "ruling class" families in the expectation that schooling would transform them into "loyal subjects and servants of France." Of course, such schools absorbed only a small minority of children; on the eve of independence less than 10 percent of children were enrolled in school.

In a detailed study of rural southern Mali, Etienne Gérard has explored how the introduction of French language schooling into a predominantly oral society served the purposes of extending state power (Gérard 1997). He argues that the primary purpose of colonial schooling was to endow students with literacy and knowledge of the French language, the two essential vehicles through which the power of the state was communicated in the form of courts and legal codes, and of bureaucratic structures and regulations, and the like. In other words, the state required that its sub-

jects be schooled in order effectively to impose its authority. Gérard drew his conclusions from a study of educational policies and practices juxtaposed with the responses of parents to the schooling on offer. In the rural area that he studied, as elsewhere in Mali, there was much resistance to such schooling, which was often seen as an alien and socially disruptive institution. And many rural parents still feel that schooling drains their communities of human resources, because most children who attend school rarely return to live and work in the village. On the other hand, many of the small minority of those who attended school were integrated into the colonial administration, where the rewards of income, status, and influence could be considerable, thus demonstrating that schooling could also lead to significant social mobility.

Similar ambivalent attitudes toward schooling persisted well into the postcolonial period, as did the association of schooling with state power. The first independent government of Mali initially sought to distance itself from the restrictive forms of colonial schooling by declaring its aim of providing primary schooling for all of Mali's children. Its policies were stated in lofty, if somewhat vague, terms about Mali's schools becoming a vehicle for "decolonizing the African mind." Schooling provision expanded rapidly during the 1960s, but within a few years the independent Marxist government was using students as a kind of militia to enforce its own radical policies.

In 1968, this government was deposed in a coup d'état which was followed by more than twenty years of military and one-party rule during which the quality of schooling gradually declined into a parlous condition. Nor were the ambitions of universal primary education ever achieved: by the 1980s, only about 25 percent of school-age children were enrolled in school, and only about 25 percent of that number successfully completed primary school.

The Marxist government did, however, bestow a significant legacy on Mali's students by guaranteeing all successful school graduates employment in the state sector, a policy that remained in force until the IMF insistence on "structural adjustment" put an end to it in the early 1980s. Until then, however, schooling became increasingly attractive, especially in urban areas, not only because of government guarantees of employment, but also because more and more parents could see that French language schooling was essential for integration into the newly emergent political economy being created by the state.

But as the demand for schooling increased, again primarily in urban areas, the system reached saturation point. The rapid expansion of the 1960s could not be sustained, and the growing demand could not be met. Consequently schooling became a scarce and much contested social re-

source. Rather than providing equal educational opportunities for all children as promised, schooling had become an instrument for creating social inequality as the schooled appropriated more and more power and wealth to themselves. School enrollments as well as the national literacy rate remained frustratingly low.

THE EVOLUTION OF MADRASA SCHOOLING

This is the social and political context in which madrasa schooling developed, and the contradictions and ambivalence that surrounded state schooling also affected the madrasas, although in different ways. Over and against those Muslims who embraced French schooling and even sought it for their children, there were many others who opposed it for fear that it would cause their children to lose their Islamic faith. Such views were not without justification, and they were only reinforced by the compulsion associated with recruitment into the state schools, a practice that continued well into the era of independence. Like the rural families cited above, many Muslim families perceived French schooling as an intrusive instrument of the state that was being forced upon them and which served only to undermine their way of life. However, Muslim families were also aware that schooling was becoming essential for integration into the newly emerging political economy. The essential question was whether preparation and training for this integration could be accomplished in a manner compatible with Muslim sensibilities.

The impulses that drove the madrasa movement came from at least two quite different sources: the first was religious and the second was the broader social demand for schooling. The founders of madrasas were well aware of both these themes, but the religious always took priority in their public statements. The pioneers of the movement placed primary emphasis on the need to reform Muslim religious schooling by introducing new pedagogical methods, which they felt would more effectively help children to learn the fundamentals of Islam. And they also wanted to teach Arabic as a second language, which would enable students more quickly to master Islamic texts in their original language, and also to have access to a wider body of Muslim literature.

Although all founders of madrasas adopted these kinds of pedagogical aims, they were also divided among themselves doctrinally. Many of the most energetic of the early founders of madrasas were advocates of Salafi doctrines to which they had been introduced in the 1930s and 1940s when they were students or pilgrims in Egypt or Saudi Arabia. Whatever its personal appeal to individual Muslims, Salafi doctrine was also conveniently compatible with the newly emerging social and political environment: it advocated a complete break with local historical forms of Muslim expression and at the same time provided a new religious platform from

which to challenge the dominant colonial order on its own ground. And the French unwittingly contributed to the politicization of this development, which they considered a threat to their hegemony and which they opposed from the moment it appeared. They quickly labeled all advocates of these new doctrines "Wahhabis," thus lumping them together regardless of their specific views and gratuitously providing them with a new Muslim identity, which in time many of them accepted (Kaba 1974; Amselle 1977).

Because many of the first madrasas were founded by the adherents of Salafi doctrine, these new schools were embroiled in conflict and controversy from the start. They were opposed both by some teachers of the classical Muslim schools and by the colonial administration, who tried in every possible way to inhibit their establishment in the 1940s and 1950s. Not all founders of madrasas were of Salafi persuasion; some were also Sufis, but their initiatives were also opposed by an administration that had decided that these experiments with new forms of religious schooling posed a threat to French authority. This situation laid the groundwork for the opposition and constraints under which the madrasas would have to struggle for almost fifty years. Successive governments, both colonial and independent, not only refused to provide any financial or moral support to these schooling initiatives; they actively opposed them.

The great irony in this situation was that the movement to develop madrasa schooling was, at least in principle, convergent with government policies after independence to extend schooling to more children. The rapid expansion of the madrasas took place during the same period when the state school system became less able to absorb all the children that parents wished to enroll in school. And so we turn to the second major impulse that fueled the madrasa movement: the social demand for schooling.

More and more parents began to accept the idea that schooling was now essential in order to secure the future welfare of their children. But many parents faced the question of the choice of school with some ambivalence. By the 1970s, the notion had become current that the French school was "for work," and the madrasa was "for religion." Many parents persisted in their refusal to enroll their children in the French schools, which still had a reputation for being irreligious and amoral. Such parents therefore chose the madrasa, where they wanted their children to be educated according to the same values that had always prevailed in the Qur'anic schools. In fact, the views of many parents are very conservative: they want the madrasas to instill Islam in their children as they have always known it and also to reproduce the social order as they have lived it. But as we have seen, the madrasas are not structured to instill this kind of moral education in their students.

At the same time, however, neither these parents nor their children are unaware that the social order has been rapidly changing for over a century. The increasing pressure from madrasa students for their schooling to prepare them for gainful employment meant that the madrasas also had in some sense to be for work as well as for religion. Of course, the madrasas were never in a position to guarantee employment to their students, but most students attending them, like their peers in the state schools, nonetheless hoped that their schooling would prepare them for the job market, even if only for religious or vocational jobs. In responding to this demand, the directors continually enhanced the secular parts of the curriculum to conform more to that in the state schools; many also began to teach French language. They had to do this in order to attract children into their schools, which relied on student fees in order to operate. As we have seen, these social and economic forces served to embed the madrasas in the contemporary political economy, which in turn deeply affected every aspect of madrasa schooling, from physical plant to pedagogical philosophy and curriculum.

Perhaps the most significant demographic feature of madrasa enrollment during the late 1980s and early 1990s was that the overwhelming majority of children enrolled were the first generation in their family to attend school, with the exception of the occasional parent who had attended Qur'anic school. The madrasas, in responding to a growing demand for schooling, were mediating and actively contributing to the process of social change, a "modern" and "modernizing" institution that was promoting social mobility and social integration.

THE "RATIONALIZATION" OF MUSLIM SCHOOLING

We must now turn our attention to the more specifically political dimensions of the growth of the madrasa movement. All experiments in madrasa schooling were opposed by the French colonial administration from the 1940s until independence. The reasons given for this opposition were varied, of which two of the most important were that many of the first initiatives were mounted by those whom the French regarded as dangerous radicals, the "Wahhabis," as the French referred to them; and they saw the use of Arabic as the language of instruction in the madrasas as "subversive" (French was the language of instruction in the state schools). But the fundamental reason for French opposition to the new schools was that they were being established independently of French control and supervision, which they were not prepared to permit.

Madrasa schooling has remained the focus of political tensions since its introduction in the 1940s. French official opposition was reinforced by many Muslims, both traditionalists who felt the new forms of school-

ing were not truly "Islamic," and others who saw in them an unwelcome orientation towards the Arab world and possible influences of Arab nationalism. And there was very strong secularist opposition; many felt that schooling through the combination of religious and secular subjects could eventually threaten the secular nature of the state, an objection that has persisted until today.

The French exercised every legal, and sometimes illegal, device they could find to inhibit the establishment of the first madrasas, but in the end they could not legitimately prohibit them from opening. They could, however, regulate their operation, and during the 1950s French administrators were at great pains to find ways to undermine the objectives of the founders of these new schools. For example, they dug up old colonial regulations that limited the number of hours in the week that Arabic could be taught in the Qur'anic schools, and which stated that general education could be given only in the French language, although indigenous languages could be used for technical training. Arabic was not considered an "indigenous language," like French, for example! They even resuscitated a 1922 decree stating that "only French, Latin and indigenous languages spoken in the colony are authorized for use in the practice of religion" (Brenner 2000, 61).

When a madrasa managed to conform to these various regulations, the French could not prevent its operating, but still the madrasas were refused formal recognition as teaching institutions, which meant that they were not qualified to receive subventions from the state. Somewhat ironically, they were classified as Qur'anic schools. Even more ironically, perhaps, Christian mission schools were recognized as teaching institutions and did receive subventions from the supposedly secular colonial administration. And they still do (Lange and Diarra 1999).

These were the first of many struggles in which the founders and directors of madrasas would have to engage with representatives of the state, both colonial and independent. It was through these conflicts and tensions that Muslim schooling began to be integrated into the national system of education in Mali. The "rationalization" of Muslim schooling refers to the gradual and conflictive process through which the madrasa constituencies and the state gradually accommodated themselves to one another. And this transformational process was unavoidable if Muslim schooling were to become relevant to the contemporary social and political context.

By the time of independence in 1960, there were approximately ten madrasas functioning in Mali, but the new government was under the influence of radical Marxists who nationalized the Bamako madrasa (with an enrollment at the time of more than five hundred students). It, along with the old French médersas, became an *école franco-arabe*, in which both French and Arabic were taught along with an exclusively secu-

lar curriculum. The government planned to nationalize, and secularize, all the madrasas in the same manner, and was only prevented from doing so by their removal from power by the coup d'état in 1968.

For over a decade, this new regime, which clung to power until the early 1990s, basically ignored the madrasas, which since independence had expanded their enrollments at something like double the rate of the state schools. And this, despite the fact that a major program of schooling expansion had been instituted by the government. In the early 1980s, when the Malian government first attempted to assess the schooling provision being offered by the madrasas, it was discovered that something like a quarter of the children enrolled in primary schools were attending madrasas. Given this evidence, the government decided it must take a more active role in regulating them, and oversight of their activities was moved from the Ministry of the Interior (Religious Affairs) to the Ministry of Education. This was the first step in a move to integrate the madrasas into the system of national education. They were declared to be "primary schools," in which religious instruction was permitted and Arabic was the language of instruction (Brenner 2000).

This announcement was greeted with deep ambivalence on the part of madrasa directors. Many had been quite content to run their establishments autonomously and without government interference. After all, in the past government interest in their affairs had only brought opposition and interference. Many smaller institutions preferred to remain invisible to the authorities, which in fact they had been for quite a while. Larger institutions had managed to make arrangements for their students to continue their studies in North Africa or the Middle East through various grants and donations. Also, this autonomy allowed full internal control of the curriculum so that directors could decide for themselves the balance between religious and secular studies.

On the other hand, integration into the national school system meant that school examinations taken in the madrasas would be officially recognized, which in turn would provide more opportunities for further study and work for madrasa students. Such recognition might also boost student enrollments. But for the examinations to be recognized, they would have to be equivalent to those in the state schools, which in turn meant that madrasa curricula would have to be standardized and brought into line with those in the state schools.

What ensued was a long series of confrontations, relieved by an occasional pause for negotiations. In effect, the Ministry of Education sought to impose this transition unilaterally through a series of decrees, whereas many of the madrasa directors had no intention of being bullied. Negotiations could be fraught, as some directors accused the entire project of being "against Islam," but eventually a set of criteria were established

according to which madrasas would be formally recognized as teaching establishments. Their students would be set examinations, in Arabic, equivalent to those set for the state schools. However, the madrasas remained fully private, fee-paying institutions and they received no financial assistance from the state. Slowly a number of madrasas began to apply for state recognition, usually the larger ones, although the majority of them have remained entirely independent.

MUSLIM VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The madrasa movement can justifiably be described as a Muslim grassroots movement. From its origins, it was motivated by individuals who wished to modernize Muslim schooling and sustained by parents who were willing to pay fees to send their children to these schools. Far from being encouraged in these initiatives, government authorities consistently sought to inhibit the operations of the madrasas. For decades these schools functioned on the margins of the educational establishment, deprived of any official recognition as schools and consequently of any financial aid, despite the fact that they were making an important contribution to school provision within the country. Whether their integration into the national school system in the 1980s should be considered a victory for madrasa constituencies, or as an appropriation by the state of a valuable resource that the state itself had not developed, remains a question on which local opinions vary.

Our argument is that the forces generated by the emerging political economy, as they affected Muslim schooling, exerted a formative influence on the evolution of the madrasas. The madrasas have been the institutional focal point for the process of rationalization that has enabled Muslim schooling to respond to the demands and needs of contemporary society. But this discussion of impersonal "forces" should not obscure the fact that the madrasa movement began with the initiatives of a few determined innovators who shared with others a commitment that a Muslim presence should be evident in a country whose population was overwhelmingly Muslim.

The emergence of the madrasas was part of a broader pattern of change amongst Muslims seeking to ensure that a Muslim voice should be heard in the public sphere. Central to this change was the appearance of the Muslim voluntary associations, which during the twentieth century became the preferred form of Muslim sociopolitical organization in Mali for those wishing to speak and act as Muslims in the national political arena. Muslim voluntary associations are a twentieth-century phenomenon. They have been deeply influenced in their structures and ways of functioning by European models of voluntary associations, which during the postwar period became the most effective vehicle for organizing inter-

est groups and broadcasting their views. Muslim voluntary associations spell out their aims and objectives in Islamic terms, and the by-laws of many of them explicitly state that their activities should be guided by the principles of Qur'an and hadith.

The objectives of these associations cover a wide range of interests: Islamic cultural affairs, education, women's affairs, youth, and development, to name just a few. There would also be Muslim political parties if the constitution did not prohibit the formation of parties based on religion. Nonetheless, many of these associations nurture political aims, even if their published objectives do not so state (Brenner 2000; Soares 2004).

All voluntary associations are subjected to administrative procedures that serve to rationalize their operation much like the madrasas. In order to function officially, they must receive formal authorization from the Ministry of the Interior. The registration documentation that they are required to submit (in French) must include the titles and names of the association's officers, such as president, secretary, and the like, as well as state its by-laws and objectives. In other words, they are required at least to adopt the appearance of conforming to a formalized style of managing their affairs, which in effect reflects the bureaucratic structure of the state.

Most of the leadership of the new Muslim associations is drawn from either of two complementary backgrounds: those schooled in the madrasas or persons from the secular schools who have opted to adopt a Muslim persona in their public activities. Interestingly it has often been persons from this latter group who in Mali have tended to adopt the most radical political positions, for example, in militating for an Islamic state. Whereas there are also radicals within the ranks of those schooled in the madrasas, especially among those with further study experience abroad in North Africa or the Middle East, most madrasa graduates have tended to be more moderate politically.

Most schooled Muslims who wish to engage in political action in the public sphere "as Muslims" have opted to act through the new voluntary associations. The Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya Sufi orders that dominated the religious and political landscape in the nineteenth century have been effectively marginalized from the political arena in Mali. The influence of the Sufi orders persists, especially in rural regions, but the political economy has changed dramatically from the nineteenth century when Muslim political authority was sanctioned and reinforced through the hegemony of Sufi spiritual authority. Today Mali is a constitutionally established secular state in which religious or spiritual authority is meant to play no active role. Nonetheless Muslim preaching of all persuasions abounds and has extended its audience via the media and cassettes (Soares 2004). Still political figures do not intervene in the public political debate based on personal divine inspiration, although this was precisely the kind of discourse

that encouraged and legitimated Muslim political expansion in the nineteenth century.

Today most advocates of the reinstatement of Muslim law, or even of the establishment of an Islamic state, while never abandoning their adherence to divine writ, nonetheless argue their position with reference to democratic principles. The most popular of such "democratic" arguments is to insist that Mali's legal infrastructure and political institutions should reflect the fact that 80 percent of its population is Muslim.

Deeper Transformations

The preceding discussion suggests that the transformation of Muslim institutions over the twentieth century in Mali has been accompanied by a transformation in how Muslims see themselves as Muslims, how they understand their Islam and how they present themselves as Muslims in the public domain. In other words, these transformations have produced a new Muslim "consciousness of self."

We have attributed the transformation of Muslim institutions to the complex process of accommodation to the new political economy that emerged in the region, initially as a result of the French colonial enterprise. And we have placed particular emphasis on the ambiguous and ambivalent implications of the expanding power of the state. On the one hand, the state was deeply resented for its intrusion into the lives of individuals with its new taxes, laws, and regulations. But on the other hand, the new political economy created social and economic opportunities for some, not least in the promise of personal wealth and influence through employment in the state apparatus.

The motor of this state expansion was schooling, because the new state was dependent on personnel being trained to administer its operations. The French needed schooled Africans to help them administer the colony, and the postcolonial state needed even more personnel to manage their expanding bureaucratic infrastructure. As a result, until the 1980s, the primary function of schooling was to feed the state bureaucracy. The state absorbed the vast majority of school leavers into its own apparatus, and in the process created a schooled elite in the country, the possessors of both relative wealth and power.

Of course, this kind of relationship between schooling and power, or between knowledge and power, is unique neither to Mali nor to the twentieth century. The leadership of precolonial Muslim polities also relied heavily on the schooled of their societies, the 'ulama, to provide religious and spiritual support for their political projects. The preceding discussion has focused primarily on how social and institutional transformations

have affected Muslim schooling. However, a broader comparison of the relationship between knowledge and power in precolonial Muslim polities and in postcolonial Mali will help us to understand some of the deeper transformations that have been taking place and that are producing a new Muslim consciousness of self.

An analysis of the relationship between knowledge and power in any given context necessarily requires an investigation of epistemology, that is, of concepts about the nature of knowledge, and about how and to whom it can be transmitted. What we wish to argue here is that during the twentieth century Muslim epistemologies, or concepts of knowledge, have been subjected to "rationalizing" forces similar to those that have affected other Muslim institutions, such as schools and voluntary associations.

The prevailing epistemology that has informed the Islamic religious culture of West Africa for centuries, and which persists today among most Muslims in the region, can be described as esoteric. "Esoteric" here refers to a set of epistemological concepts that impose constraints on the dissemination of certain kinds of knowledge. Classical forms of Muslim schooling and of Sufi thought in West Africa are both deeply imbued with esoteric concepts of knowledge, as were the political ideologies of precolonial Muslim polities. According to this esoteric epistemology, several different kinds, or qualities, of knowledge exist, which are ordered in a kind of hierarchy. Religious knowledge is considered to be superior to "secular" knowledge, which is not taught in the Qur'anic school. But religious knowledge itself is subdivided into different categories depending upon both the manner in which it is transmitted and who is deemed worthy to receive it. Thus distinctions are drawn between knowledge that is derived through the intellect, for example through the study of books, and "spiritual" knowledge, which is acquired directly through what Ibn Arabi called "the eye of discernment" and Ibn Khaldun referred to as "supernatural perception."

This hierarchy of knowledge is intimately related to the initiatic nature of its transmission. According to an esoteric epistemology, Islamic knowledge, whether intellectual or spiritual, can be legitimately acquired only through personal transmission from persons who are qualified, and have been authorized, to transmit it. Further the acquisition of Islamic knowledge is intimately related to devotional praxis; the very process of acquiring knowledge is intended to transform its possessor. This spiritual transformation prepares one for access to higher levels of spiritual knowledge and to acquire secret or esoteric bodies of knowledge that are hidden from the uninitiated. Not all knowledge is available to all persons, and possession of and access to secret knowledge is closely associated with one's religious persona and status.

This hierarchical structuring of knowledge is replicated in a complex hierarchy of religious specialists that distinguishes in a variety of ways between "those who know" and "those who don't know." Those who know, that is the schooled, the 'ulama and the lesser religious clerics, have always constituted only a relatively small minority of the population; in the past, religious teaching and scholarship were often occupations monopolized by specific lineages. Nor in the past did prevailing political economies require any form of universal schooling to function effectively. Formal schooling was solely a religious undertaking, and the basic function of the schooled was to guide the unschooled in the practice of their religion.

The hierarchy of the schooled consisted of many levels of religious learning and competence. There were teachers and clerics who provided religious services to the local populations, as well as those recognized as 'ulama, the more respected and venerated scholars in various fields of the classical religious sciences. At the summit of the hierarchy were individuals whose spiritual attainments were thought to enable them to receive spiritual knowledge directly from the Prophet, or from other deceased holy persons, through the medium of dreams and visions. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya Sufi orders became significant social and political forces in West Africa, these spiritual powers were lodged primarily in the shaykhs of the Sufi orders. During this period, the leadership of most of the Muslim polities in West Africa, whether they were structured as states or as lineage type organizations, was held by Sufi shaykhs. These shaykhs legitimated their policies and actions with reference not only to the classical Islamic texts, but also to spiritual directives that they received in dreams and visions.

But esoteric knowledge was by no means limited to the shaykhs of the Sufi orders. The conceptual foundations of the Muslim healing sciences were also firmly based on an esoteric epistemology. Muslim healing practices have taken many forms: the fabrication of amulets, divination, the power to communicate with and to affect the behavior of afflicting *jinn*. And their historical significance in West Africa has been considerable. There are numerous recorded instances of Muslim influence entering into the courts of non-Muslim states by means of a Muslim practitioner successfully praying for rain, or ensuring success in a military battle. But also of great significance has been the influence of Muslim healing practices at the grass roots, among Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Muslim clerics received a significant proportion of their income from their healing practice.

One of the major functions of classical Islamic schooling was to train Muslim clerics as healers, and even in Qur'anic schools 'esoteric' concepts of knowledge pervaded all aspects of religious learning and teaching. To

take but one specific example, many Muslim healing practices are based on the idea that the words of the Qur'an (the words of God) are in themselves sacred and contain a power that can be manipulated in order to affect the lives of living human beings, ideas that children begin to absorb from the time they begin their Qur'anic schooling (Mommersteeg 1991). Such ideas are derived from fundamental notions about the unity of God's creation, which suggest that God's words in the Qur'an are imbued with something of His power, to which some men can have access. The techniques for tapping into this power were found in what are called the sciences of letters, numbers, and magic squares, knowledge of which was meant to be obtained only through an initiatic process of study with an authorized teacher and spiritual mentor (Brenner 1985; Soares 1997).

Despite the many changes that have taken place in Mali since the beginning of the twentieth century, esoteric concepts of knowledge have by no means disappeared. They continue to prevail in the epistemologies that inform the transmission of knowledge in Qur'anic and majlis schools, and although the Sufi orders have been displaced from their former position of political hegemony, Sufi shaykhs still exercise considerable religious and social influence. Furthermore the Muslim healing sciences, especially the manufacture of amulets, continues to thrive (Soares 1997).

Nonetheless, as we have seen, powerful new political, economic, and social forces are producing a dramatic shift, in which schooling is playing a major role. And although this break with the past has been initiated in the first instance by French colonial intervention, many Muslims have endorsed it. Perhaps the strongest, or at least the most vocal, Muslim voice for change has come from those of Salafi persuasion who have distanced themselves in every possible way from local historical forms of Muslim expression, including Sufism, healing practices, and traditional forms of Muslim schooling. But as we have seen, it was not only Salafis who became convinced that the classical forms of Islamic studies as taught in Qur'anic and majlis schools were no longer adequate or relevant to the changing conditions. New forms of schooling would be required in order to prepare young Muslims for integration into the new political economy as Muslims.

And so, Muslim schooling in the form of the madrasas became subject to the same rationalizing forces that were affecting all Muslim institutions. As new schooling infrastructures and new teaching methods were introduced, a new rationalized epistemology began to appear that eroded esoteric concepts of knowledge. Of course, the divine revelation of the Qur'an continues to provide ultimate guidance for the behavior of Muslims, and also is considered superior to all secular forms of knowledge. But according to this rationalized epistemology all knowledge, both secular and religious, is acquired by means of the intellect and humans are

not seen to have access to other forms of secret or hidden knowledge. Religious devotion becomes separated from the process of acquiring knowledge as such. The learning process loses its sacred and initiatic character, religious and secular subjects are taught side by side, and all knowledge is equally available to everyone (at least in theory).

The initiatic aspects of the learning process disappear in the madrasa. The personal and individual relationships so central to classical forms of learning are no longer pursued, nor are they possible, given the demographic composition and social infrastructure of the madrasas and the teaching methodologies that are employed. The professional teachers of the madrasas are trained (insofar as they receive formal training) to transmit knowledge and skills, not to develop the spiritual potential of their students. Consequently, teachers are no longer perceived, or treated, as "holy" persons by either parents or students. The sacred nature of classical religious schooling is replaced with a pedagogical method that is more technical, and also perhaps more open to science. The madrasas of course retain their religious objectives and many madrasa graduates will still choose to follow some sort of religious vocation; many become madrasa teachers. And proficient control of Islamic knowledge, as well as literate knowledge of Arabic, continues to be a source of social status and influence. But in the madrasas, the teaching of religious studies is completely integrated with the teaching of literacy and numeracy, the essential skills that will enable students to find remunerative work in the new political economy.

It remains to be seen whether this trend toward the rationalization of Muslim concepts of knowledge will eventually succeed in completely obscuring the esoteric epistemology; presently this is far from the case. But it is important to understand that because the French so effectively displaced existing religious hierarchies, Mali today has no established and publicly recognized body of 'ulama, a situation that differs significantly from many of the other examples presented in this book. It is arguable that the madrasas are beginning to train a new class of 'ulama; most madrasa graduates are drawn to religious occupations, as imams of mosques and teachers in the madrasas. Some are also acting as religious advisors for the new Muslim associations. In all these situations, one of their primary tasks is to contribute to a reinterpretation of Islamic precepts in the light of the contemporary sociopolitical context. Madrasa graduates therefore constitute a potential class of new 'ulama, and it remains to be seen what impact they will have on the political landscape in Mali, and what new relationships they might forge between Islamic knowledge and the power of the state.

The pioneers of the madrasa movement could not have anticipated the long term implications of their initiatives. We have seen how the explosive

demand for madrasa schooling, combined with subsequent pressures for accommodation with the state to provide a standardized curriculum, has had the effect of rationalizing Muslim schooling—"rationalizing" in the sense of integrating it more and more into the contemporary political economy, financially, pedagogically, socially, and even politically. Financially, because the madrasas are fully integrated into the cash economy; pedagogically, because in them rationalized concepts of knowledge are replacing esoteric concepts in structuring patterns of thought; socially, because students want their madrasa schooling to prepare them for gainful employment; and politically, because by now virtually all directors of the madrasas have accepted that they must negotiate with the state if they wish to operate effectively.

This transforming process of institutional rationalization has also affected those who teach and learn in the madrasas. The madrasas have acted as institutions of social and religious mediation, preparing Muslims to engage with the challenges posed by contemporary conditions in Mali, and to speak and act as Muslims in the public arena. In all these ways, the madrasas have contributed to the formation of a new Muslim "consciousness of self" which differs profoundly from that which prevailed prior to the colonial period.

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CHAPTER 10

Islamic Education in Britain: Approaches to Religious Knowledge in a Pluralistic Society

Peter Mandaville

As a minority faith community in a highly pluralistic cultural environment, the United Kingdom's Muslim population has faced a unique set of challenges relating to the issue of Islamic education and its place in British society. A phenomenon, predominantly, of postcolonial migration, the presence and public perception of Islam in the UK is intrinsically enmeshed within a wider set of debates relating to questions of citizenship, identity, and the integration of ethnic and religious minorities. National education systems and curricula have, of course, always represented key crucibles for the making of citizens. To use Benedict Anderson's evocative language, schools constitute a vital component of the process through which one's consciousness of belonging to an "imagined community" of conationalists is inculcated (1991). It was perhaps inevitable, then, that the education and schooling for Britain's ethnic and religious minorities would emerge as a particularly contentious issue as soon as voices emerged advocating for a distinctively Muslim or Islamic approach to education. This politics of identity thus necessarily forms the general background terrain in which the present chapter is situated.

This chapter will provide an overview of the major forms of Islamic education in Britain from the primary level through higher education, with some brief coverage of training for religious professionals (imams). Contrasting approaches and cognitive styles will be highlighted, with considerable attention paid to the question of how British provenance impacts the teaching, reception, and understanding of Islamic knowledge. Profiles of key institutions and personalities are offered followed by a critical analysis of the role of Islamic education in British society (especially in terms of the aforementioned citizenship, identity, and integration issues) and then also in the wider context of contemporary Muslim intellectual traditions. It is worth clarifying at the outset that the present study is concerned first and foremost with the variety and forms of Islamic education in the UK rather than the separate question of education for Britain's Muslims more generally, many of whom hold this identity by virtue of their ethnic background (varying considerably in terms of levels of

religious observance) and are quite secular in terms of their sociocultural orientation. This chapter instead focuses exclusively on those institutions that have as their primary concern the study of Islam or the "Islamic sciences," or which understand themselves to be educating their students in a distinctively Islamic environment. Despite the existence of numerous informal, part-time and weekend classes in religious education, this study is also limited for the most part to those institutions engaged in the full-time teaching of formal curricula or degree programs.

A number of common themes and questions will structure the institutional profiles and analysis of Islamic education offered below. While some of these will have primary relevance only to institutions of a particular type, collectively they define the parameters of the debate around Islamic education in the United Kingdom. First is the issue of how and where Islam fits into the institution in question. Is Islam a primary object of study? If so, where does it sit relative to other subjects of study (if any)? Is religion perhaps mainly seen to define the social ethos and moral schemata of the school? As Muslims themselves, how do instructors and students negotiate their teaching and learning of Islam in the various institutional categories? Second, and somewhat related, is the question of cognitive style. What sort of intellectual orientation to Islam as an academic subject is fostered in the institution? How is this reflected in pedagogical method? How are the issues of critical reflection on and the objectification of religion handled in classroom settings that seek to combine multiple traditions of learning and inquiry? Third, and again following closely, is the issue of what role Islamic schools in Britain play in terms of redefining the contours of Muslim knowledge production. How, if at all, do the curricula of these institutions seek to reorient students' intellectual orientation to Islam? To what extent do their activities seek to patrol the boundaries of tradition, or—conversely—to what extent do they see themselves fostering greater intellectual pluralism and challenging traditional sources and figures of authority? Finally, and moving on now to issues more closely related to the wider social role and function of Muslim education, is the question of how Islamic schools of various types fit into the aforementioned debates about isolationism, the social integration of immigrant communities, and notions of citizenship and belonging. Do these schools see themselves as encouraging civic education and participation in mainstream British society, or do they function as spaces designed, through segregation, to protect Islam and Muslim identity against distortions and distractions imparted by too much contact with British society? If the former, how are issues of tolerance, coexistence and relations with non-Muslims handled in the classroom?

Unlike almost all of the other chapters in the present volume, it is worth briefly noting, the case of Islamic education in Britain provides insight

into conceptions and practices of religious schooling in a social setting in which Islam is not the majority religion. Barbara Metcalf's chapter on religious education within India's Muslim community also highlights a situation in which minority consciousness looms large in considerations of Muslim self-identity, albeit one marked with considerably more direct vulnerability for that group. And while we can certainly point to other cases where religious education, and particularly the question of governmental control over this activity, has appeared as a key locus of state-society contention (e.g., Turkey and Pakistan), Islamic schooling in the United Kingdom represents a situation in which education has emerged as a primary space in which fundamental questions about the societal inclusion and belonging of minority communities are negotiated. In secular Muslim-majority countries such as Turkey, the terms of the relationship between Islam and the state might often be a subject of politics, but the presence of Islam per se (in its "correct" cultural place) is not problematic. However, because in Britain Islam is immediately associated with tensions surrounding ethnic minority groups and wider debates around immigration, the religion itself (even when wholly depoliticized) has tended to serve as a sharp marker of difference and otherness.

In the aftermath of the July 7, 2005 bombings in London, the debate intensified further, with Muslim institutions regarded by some as potential threats to British security. While this chapter is not primarily concerned with issues of identity politics and citizenship, they are worth bearing in mind throughout the subsequent discussion of Islamic education in the UK. Indeed, the public debate in Britain about Islamic schools in recent years has been defined largely in these terms, and such issues have also heavily informed the thinking of British Muslim leaders pursuing various and disparate approaches to the provision of Islamic education.

Islam in Britain: A Brief Background

Since Islam is a minority phenomenon in Britain and the emergence of Muslims as a significant social force a relatively recent development, some brief words by way of general background are in order. More comprehensive treatments can be found in Lewis (2002), Nielsen (2005), Seddon, Hussain, and Malik (2004), and Gilliat-Ray (2006).

The UK's Muslim population in 2001 stood at 1.6 million, or just under 3 percent of the total population.[1] The ethnic composition of this community reflects its origins in waves of mass migration from postcolonial states and the Commonwealth in the wake of WWII and decolonization. Approximately three quarters of Britain's Muslims are of South Asian origin, with significant communities also from Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and

Iran. The major population centers are London, Bradford, Luton, Birmingham, Oldham, and Leicester.

The first families to arrive in the UK from countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India tended to concentrate themselves in communities quite tightly insulated from mainstream British society. While this was certainly deliberate to some degree, it is, however, questionable whether in the early days those wanting to reach out to non-Muslims would have been met with a reciprocal gesture. The South Asian experience through the 1970s and 1980s was largely one of racism and social exclusion. Watershed "Muslim" events in the UK, such as the unrest in 1987 surrounding Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*, must be understood in good measure as a function of ethnic discrimination and socioeconomic deprivation. While there have been abortive attempts since the 1970s to establish national organizations and representative bodies for Britain's Muslims, these have tended to founder due to the persistence of ethnosectarian divides, rivalries, and suspicions. It was not until the mid-1990s that signs of greater cohesion within the community began to emerge, coupled with efforts on the part of the British government to be more responsive to issues of concern to its Muslim population. The formation in 1997 of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)—an umbrella entity composed of some four hundred affiliate organizations—marked the first successful and durable effort to establish a nationally representative body for British Muslims.

With some families now entering the third generation and understanding themselves to be as much British as South Asian or Muslim, it would be a mistake to think of Islam in Britain primarily as an "immigrant religion." The younger generation, in particular, has sought in recent years to transcend what they perceive as the "village Islam" of their parents—culturally tainted and mired in a religious imagination whose parameters are defined by rural Pakistan in the 1960s. When it comes to the provision of religious services, for examples, the older generation has tended to rely on imams and muftis trained and, in some instances, brought over from their countries of origin. Young Muslims in the UK in recent years have felt strongly alienated from what they perceive as mosque leaderships out of touch with the issues they face and unwilling to engage in discussions about Islam and what it means in Britain today. It is thus not surprising that the last few years have seen the emergence of the first generation of imams and other religious leaders schooled within the United Kingdom and, as will be described briefly below, a set of outreach efforts on the part of Islamic training institutions that seek to more thoroughly "acclimatize" imams in Britain to the specific needs of their increasingly younger constituencies. For many in this new generation the imperative is to define and articulate the contours of a more universal approach to

the religion, divorced from the particularities of ethnocultural bias. This is an orientation that emphasizes the need for religion to speak and be relevant to the daily concerns and issues that arise from life as a minority in a complex, pluralistic society in the twenty-first century. In recent years, the issue of Islamic education has thus been a vital part of the debate about what it means to be a British Muslim today and an important terrain in the negotiation of identity, citizenship, and coexistence.

Varieties of Islamic Education in Britain

The unique circumstances and diversity of Britain's Muslim community are reflected in a similar variety of approaches to and institutional manifestations of Islamic education. While the classical madrasa model is certainly to be found in the United Kingdom—and will be covered in this study—the specific concerns and problems posed by the minority status of Britain's Muslims has also led to the development of other strategies that do not so easily correspond to models in other parts of the Muslim world. In trying to understand the meaning and role of Islamic education in the UK, we cannot focus exclusively on those institutions that teach the traditional curriculum of religious studies. Indeed, the distinction between various forms of religious education in the British context often turns precisely on the question of how and where Islam enters the picture.

Briefly stated, the four types of Islamic school to be found in the UK at present are as follows:

1. Primary and secondary "faith schools" in which the methods and subjects of instruction correspond almost exclusively to the British national curriculum; teachers and students are almost exclusively Muslim, and the institutions seek to provide a learning environment imbued with an "Islamic ethos."
2. Higher education facilities teaching Islamic studies in the Western liberal humanities tradition or a hybrid curriculum combining the former with the classical Islamic sciences; students and faculty almost exclusively Muslim; qualifications earned include standard postbaccalaureate credentials and/or certification as an 'alim (religious scholar); and qualifications for religious professionals (imam training, pastoral skills) also offered.
3. Madrasas—commonly referred to as the Dar ul-Ulooms (Dar al-'Ulum: house of learning)—providing the traditional course of study in Islamic sciences that leads to qualification as an 'alim; pedagogy and intellectual traditions derived very closely from parent seminaries in other Muslim countries, particularly Deoband (see chapters by Metcalf and Zaman, this volume); settings are often highly insular; and the least influenced by mainstream British education of all those under consideration.

4. Informal and semistructured programs of learning organized around individual key figures of religious authority; a personified approach to Islamic education most commonly associated with highly conservative and often radical shaykhs; and students commonly a mixture of young adults of Muslim background "rediscovering" their religion (after varying levels of formal education) and recent converts.

Most institutions of Islamic learning in Britain correspond fairly closely, if not identically, to one of these four categories. One can certainly debate whether all of them are genuine examples of formal Islamic education (particularly those in categories 1 and 4). As will become clear, however, it is the very question of just what constitutes Islamic education that is at the core of so many debates today within both the British Muslim community and British society at large. This chapter will limit itself to an overview and analysis of types 1 through 3, all of which represent examples of full-time institutions teaching formal and comprehensive curricula. Treatments of informal, "personified" Islamic education—particularly in its more radical variant—can be found in Mandaville (2005) and Wiktorowicz (2005).

The history of Islamic education in the UK closely reflects the history of the British Muslim experience. The first institutions of religious education for Muslims in Britain were of the Dar ul-Uloom variety and appeared in the mid-1970s, followed in the 1980s by the first faith schools, and, eventually, early incarnations of the higher education institutions. Initial replicas of traditional seminaries from the South Asian homeland—inward-looking and cut off from mainstream British society—eventually led to attempts at offering the British national curriculum in settings that preserve Muslim identity and social ethics. Later we begin to see efforts, via higher education facilities, to articulate a distinctive social and intellectual agenda for Muslims as British Muslims (as distinct from the earlier and less locally grounded conception of Muslims in Britain). As will become clearer later, it is now becoming possible to detect new hybrid models of Islamic education that combine elements of traditional Islamic sciences and liberal Islamic studies in the same curriculum.

To moderate any temptation to rush to the new, however, it is worth pointing out that madrasas in the UK, largely cut off from the mainstream, still tend for the most part to keep a very low profile, and have gone largely unnoticed in the UK. Teaching as they did in the early days an exclusively traditional course of Islamic study, the Dar ul-Ulooms were not required to register with the Department of Education. It was only with the emergence of the first Muslim faith schools, which did teach the national curriculum and were hence required to register with the government, that the presence of Islamic education in Britain became a public

issue. This was happening at a time of great tension around the UK's immigrant population, and the emergence of what was perceived as an attempt to establish a parallel religious sector for the education of Muslims became an important component of the discussion around integration and isolationism. This dynamic was further exacerbated, as we will see, when some of the faith schools began a long and eventually successful campaign to secure government funding.

Also worthy of note and some further consideration is the fact that, according to a study by the Muslim Council of Britain, only 3 percent of all Muslims in school in the UK attend institutions that can be considered to provide some form of Islamic education. There does indeed seem to be a perceived hierarchy of education in the eyes of Muslims when it comes to questions of how education facilitates social mobility, with most parents seeming to favor the integrationist path of sending their children to state schools. While there are certainly manifold issues surrounding religion and the treatment of ethnic minorities in state schools in the UK, such questions are beyond the scope of this chapter. The extremely small number of Muslim children attending Islamic educational institutions is however important to note in the context of wider questions relating to the integration of immigrant communities and the formation of Muslim British citizens.

Profiles of Islamic Education

Muslim Faith Schools

Following the longstanding tradition of Church of England schools, and also various Jewish institutions, Muslim faith schools have existed in Britain since the early 1980s. There are now just over one hundred of these institutions in the UK. The most prominent among them—and the focus of this profile—is the network of three schools in London operated by Yusuf Islam, formerly the musician Cat Stevens, under the auspices of his Islamia Schools Trust. These are the Islamia Primary School (est. 1983), Islamia Girls' Secondary (est. 1989), and Brondesbury College for Boys (est. 1996). All three of these schools are based on the British national curriculum, and the two secondary schools have consistently ranked at the top of local league tables in terms of student pass rates on national assessment exams. While numerous Christian and Jewish faith schools have received government support on a "voluntary aided" basis, it was not until 1998, after twelve years of unsuccessful attempts, that the Islamia Primary School became the first Muslim school in the UK to receive state funds, with a handful of others also following suit.

The question of how and where Islam fits into the Islamia Schools is one that has been dealt with in various ways since its inception. Initially founded by a small group of parents seeking an Islamic environment in which to educate their children, the main idea was to instill and promote an Islamic ethos in the students rather than to concentrate primarily on the study of religion itself. While this remains the focus today, successive internal debates regarding the place of religion in the classroom coupled with suspicions originating from the wider public led the Islamia Trust in 2000 to adopt an institution-wide policy about the application of Islam within their schools ("Application of Islam at the Islamia Primary and Islamia Girls' School"; the Brondesbury College for Boys also claims to adhere to the same text). The emphasis throughout this document is on the need to conduct all teaching, mentoring, and nurturing of children in accordance with principles found in the Qur'an and Sunna, and aspects of the text reflect the Salafi influences that circulated around the Islamia school in its early years. Pastoral duties are generally left to the school imam, and students regularly attend the mosque attached to the school.

Teachers for the most part are left to their own devices when it comes to deciding if, when, and how religion is brought directly to bear on classroom lessons. According to one teacher, each instructor tends to exercise his or her own judgment on this issue: "For most teachers, the Islamic ethos enters the classroom through being role models and exemplifying Islamic values rather than through the direct teaching of Islam. If, from time to time, we see a hadith relevant to the lesson, we'll bring it in." This statement nicely illustrates the sense in which the classroom in British Muslim faith schools might best be understood in the context of what Gregory Starrett calls the "functionalization" of religious discourse. "First, social functions (increased health, cleanliness, order)"—and one might easily add education and diligent study to this list—"are attributed to Islamic practices," he writes. "Then these functions are interpreted not only as effects, but as the primary intent of given practices, and therefore divinely sanctioned themselves" (Starrett 1998, 142).

Teachers at Islamia report that over the years the school has seen occasional waves of "Islamization," often at the behest of Salafi-oriented parents. This has taken the form of demands that evidence from Qur'an and Sunna be used to support major points in the curriculum and also sometimes pressure to use books by Muslim authors. In one instance a father formed an "Islamisation committee" (composed, it would seem, solely of himself) and proceeded to examine all books in the classrooms. One text that did not pass muster, for example, was a short picture story entitled "Bill's New Frock" about a boy who woke up one morning to find that he had turned into a girl. Next to the story's title is a red stamp bearing the words "Caution! Unsuitable. Islamisation Committee."

The Islamia Schools' guidelines on religion seek to be as ecumenical as possible within the Islamic tradition, although certain parameters and red lines are drawn from time to time. The "Application of Islam" document states, for example, that the school has taken as its central doctrine the *'Aqida Tahawiyya*, a creedal work of the early tenth century described by the school's leadership as a standard baseline synthesis of the core principles and beliefs held by most Muslims. Although the school's current leadership would be unlikely to identify itself in such terms, the *'Aqida Tahawiyya* has been commonly associated with Salafi influence—a doctrinally narrow and literalist orientation historically averse to rationalist or mystical orientations. The text of the *'Aqida Tahawiyya* contains explicit exhortations against Mu'tazilites (rationalists) and the Qadiriyya Sufis. The "Application of Islam" document goes on to indicate that "staff should respect all valid and recognized schools of thought," but also points out certain exceptions to this rule, such as regards the Qadiyani (also commonly known as the Ahmadis, see Zaman's chapter on Pakistan, this volume; Zaman 2002), a group perceived by most orthodox Muslims to lie outside the boundaries of creed due to their alleged elevation of the movement's founder to the status of a prophet. On the question of madhhabs (schools of jurisprudence), the Islamia Schools recognize no official orientation and also indicate acceptance of the idea that madhhabs are unnecessary ("our intention is to recognize the diversity of Muslim culture expressed through the different schools of thought"). This is a position which, while apparently allowing for pluralism, is also consistent with those aspects of Salafi thought that downplay the importance of madhhabs in the name of a single, true Islam. The schools emphasize an avowedly apolitical stance, connecting this with their status as a government-funded entity. When it comes to issues of citizenship, Islamia indicates a broadly accepting vision of political participation: "Part of the participation of the citizen is to vote—so we encourage an attitude in children to participate in group decisions and for them to be aware of the general tenets of democracy as it is known in the West."

Despite an ostensible emphasis on the virtues of citizenship and recent attempts to incorporate civic education into the curriculum at the secondary school level, questions still persist about whether faith schools have a negative impact on social cohesion and interethnic tensions. In early 2005, for example, the British chief inspector of schools, David Bell, suggested that Muslim schools might not be sufficiently preparing children for life in British society, citing specific worries about intolerance and the quality of citizenship lessons—a set of concerns that grew in profile and magnitude later that summer in the wake of the London bombings. While these criticisms were roundly rejected by the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS)—a Birmingham-based charity and advocacy group lob-

bying for more state funding for Muslim faith schools—a number of faith school headteachers and Muslim leaders accepted that in the case of certain institutions there might be a grain of truth in his criticism: "It was just said in an unhelpful way at a particularly sensitive time." Partly in response to such concerns, AMS is developing a set of professional development programs to ensure that all teachers at Muslim schools earn the government recognized Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Brondesbury College is developing interfaith programs that permit, for example, Muslim and Jewish students to visit each others' schools and sites of worship. Nonetheless concerns about the impact of a parallel Muslim education sector—albeit one teaching the national curriculum—and its effect on conceptions of citizenship and belonging among young boys and girls socialized within an exclusively Muslim peer group are likely to endure for some time.

Higher Education and Training for Religious Professionals

Though few in number and relatively small in terms of student enrollments, the various institutions of higher Islamic education in the United Kingdom merit examination due to their attempts to fuse multiple and disparate intellectual traditions. A few of these schools are also engaged in continuing professional education that seeks to address a number of the wider social tensions around Islam alluded to earlier in the chapter.[2] While this study confines itself to those institutions that describe themselves in explicitly Islamic terms, it is also worth noting that interest in and enrollment by Muslims in courses about Islam in (secular) British public universities has increased significantly in recent years. Particular institutions—such as the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and Selly Oaks College in Birmingham—have emerged as important locations, if not of "Islamic learning," then certainly of learning about Islam for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The Muslim College

The Muslim College in London was established in 1987 after a decade of effort by its founder and principal, the late Dr. Zaki Badawi, an Azhar-trained former imam of Regents Park Mosque and one of the grand figures of British Islam. Indeed the college is at this point virtually indistinguishable from its founder. Primary funding for the Muslim College comes from the Libyan-based World Islamic Call Society, although Badawi insisted that he never allowed any conditions to be imposed on curricular design as part of the relationship. The Libyan financial support permits tuition fees to be waived for all students. The primary program

of study at the Muslim College, a nonresidential institution, is a two-year MA in Islamic Studies. Also offered is a diploma and certificate in Islamic Studies (intended mainly for non-Muslims) in collaboration with the continuing education program at Birkbeck College at the University of London. Although the MA program currently has no formal accreditation, Badawi reported that al-Azhar in Cairo recognizes credentials earned at the college. With the planned introduction of M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs, the Muslim College plans to seek validation through the Open University. Student intake is approximately fifteen per year, with about half coming from within the UK and half from abroad (mainly the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia). While a baccalaureate qualification is assumed for all entering students, Badawi also mentioned capacity for critical thinking as a prerequisite for entry into the college.

In addition to the Islamic ethos common to all Muslim schools in the UK, Zaki Badawi emphasized a particular intellectual culture at the Muslim College. In his view, Islamic classrooms in the UK should serve as incubators to "formulate the future of Islam in the homeland." Badawi consistently argued that Muslim communities in the West are best positioned to bring genuinely innovative thought and intellectual vigor to their religion (Mandaville 2001). He claimed that all schools of thought are taught objectively and critically at the Muslim College and that unlike at al-Azhar ("really in decline"), students are pushed to challenge any and all ideas presented in class. A review of the curriculum for the MA in Islamic Studies does not reveal any obvious bias in the presentation of theology or jurisprudence. The program also includes modules in world religions and Western philosophy.

While clearly hoping through his graduates to reach wider Muslim communities and to have some impact on public discourse, Badawi admitted that most graduates do not generally go on to become imams (although, it should be noted, the MA program at the college does offer several courses in imam training). One graduate has served on the Afghan constitutional committee and Badawi also claimed to have had influence on a number of students associated with the Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS) of Malaysia. Despite a few success stories of this sort, it is generally doubtful whether the breadth of Badawi's intellectual vision was ever matched by the capacity of his institution, a fact of which he seemed all too aware. Shortly before his death in January 2006, the Muslim College's founder was particularly sensitive to the need to identify a successor to carry the mission of his institution into the next generations. Interestingly and despite all of his emphasis on the creative potential of Islamic thought in the West, Badawi focused the search for his heir primarily in Egypt, betraying perhaps a latent conviction that despite its "real decline" the Azhar classical tradition still prevails over diasporic innovation.

The Markfield Institute of Higher Education

The Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE) was established in 2000 as an affiliate body of the Islamic Foundation outside Leicester. The Foundation has been in existence since 1973 and was originally an outlet in Britain for the intellectual influences of the Pakistani Jama'at-i Islam, and particularly Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi. While this link persists to some extent today insofar as Khurshid Ahmad, Chairman of the Foundation and Rector of MIHE, remains a major figure within the Jama'at, the vast majority of the staff, teachers, and intellectual output of these institutions have departed from this influence. For the first three years of its existence, degree programs taught at MIHE were validated through (the rather distant) Portsmouth University and in 2003 this switched to neighboring Loughborough University. Almost exclusively a postbaccalaureate institution (save for its professional training activities), MIHE offers a mixture of taught and research programs in the form of the MA, M.Phil., and Ph.D. In addition to the MA in Islamic Studies, MIHE also teaches MA programs in Muslim Community Studies and Islamic Management, Banking, and Finance. A certificate program in Muslim Chaplaincy is also offered.

Much like the Muslim College, MIHE provides something of a hybrid approach to Islamic education, combining elements of Islamic study in the humanities tradition with an Islamic ethos and social environment. The MIHE course modules are somewhat less traditional than the Muslim College, incorporating subjects such as "Muslim Political Thought and Activism," "Islam and Pluralism," "Islam in Europe," and "Islam, Women, and Feminism." The syllabus for the courses on Islam in Europe and pluralism feature heavily the work of Muslim authors who stress the permissiveness and compatibility of Muslims being citizens of and actively participating in the associational life of non-Muslim countries—an interesting point to consider in light of recent questions about how religious schools approach the issue of negotiating social difference. The demographic profile of its nearly 70 students breaks down along the same lines as the Muslim College: 50 percent British, 50 percent from outside the UK. When compared with the Muslim College, one also notices a distinct disparity in terms of the ethnic composition of the student body at MIHE. Reflecting their origins and the background of their intellectual leaderships, one finds at the former far more Arab students and at the latter a predominantly South Asian student body. Reflecting on this phenomenon and pointing to the Islamic Foundation's pioneering work in the field of Islamic economics, Foundation Executive Director and founding Director of MIHE Manazir Ahsan speculates about the global role his institutions could play in redressing certain asymmetries of

scholarly power in the umma. "The Arabs already have their scholars," he says, "we need more Islamic scholarship in Urdu, Turkish, Malay, and Persian."

The classroom environment at MIHE also represents another hybrid element insofar as students with modern, secular educational backgrounds share classes with classically trained imams. For those less familiar with the idioms of critical scholarship, MIHE offers precourses in aspects of research methodology and critical thinking. Like at the Muslim College, students are encouraged to engage critically with the canon of Islamic thought, with an emphasis on identifying new areas of ijtihad. Given the variety of backgrounds and perspectives in the classroom, differences commonly arise. Rather than trying to arbitrate and settle on a "correct" answer in the classroom, says one teacher, "I ask students to think of the MA program as a year to identify questions to be answered over a lifetime of personal exploration." MIHE's leadership also speaks of placing a European "accent" on the articulation of Islamic education, seeking to emphasize the importance of familiarity with local culture on the part of religious scholars and imams based in the West. MIHE Director Ataullah Siddiqui recounts a seminar he once had with a group of 'ulama:

> It has long been established in Islamic jurisprudence that in order to be qualified to issue a fatwa, an 'alim must be familiar with the *'urf* and *'adat* (customs and common usages) of the social context in which he is speaking. So I asked this group of 'ulama, what about the 'urf and 'adat of Europe? How much of this have you really bothered to learn?!

Siddiqui also reports the first signs of a greater willingness on the part of a new generation of 'ulama from the Dar ul-Uloom (see below)—previously regarded as insular and generally unwilling to engage with mainstream British society or alternative conceptions of Islam—to participate in conversations and honest exchanges with Muslims holding views different from their own.

Certain features of MIHE's certificate program in Muslim chaplaincy make it worthy of particular note. Incorporating study modules such as "Management of Mosques and Islamic Centres," "Inter-Faith Relations," and "Pastoral Care in Islam," the program is designed to equip aspiring and already employed imams with the skills necessary to assume professional chaplaincy duties in schools, prisons, hospitals, and the armed forces. Interestingly the program was designed in collaboration with the local diocese of the Church of England. The certificate carries a requirement of a sixty-hour practical residency, in which imams are often placed with a serving Christian chaplain to acquire observational and experiential knowledge of pastoral duties. In this sense, the Muslim chaplaincy

program at MIHE has integrated within it a component of interfaith relations. Also of note are the gender dimensions of this program. Women have been regular participants in the program, comprising in 2005 half of the class. They regularly go on to assume chaplaincy positions in schools and hospitals, albeit with their contact limited to those of the same sex. With the government increasingly concerned about the standards of stewardship within British mosques, Siddiqui reports considerable interest in the Muslim chaplaincy program and speculates as to whether it might one day become a prerequisite for appointment as an imam. The question then arises as to how institutions perceived as providing Islamic education according to the "official specifications" of the British government are likely to be viewed by certain segments of the wider Muslim population.

Asked to identify the greatest obstacle to the growth and expansion of the Markfield Institute, Siddiqui does not speak first about resources or facilities. "The problem," he says, "is less one of money or space, but more of having too few teachers who think the right way. We need a new generation." Whether MIHE can serve as the conduit for that new generation remains to be seen, but it seems clear that it, along with Zaki Badawi's Muslim College, has at least identified the need to work towards a new idiom of Islamic education for British Muslims. Of the two, the Markfield Institute appears to have more thoroughly diagnosed and integrated the needs of Britain's new generation of Muslims into its curricular programming. Both institutions, however, are modest in terms of size and influence at this time and would require considerable expansion in order for their distinctive cognitive styles and pluralistic tendencies to have wider impact.

Madrasas / Dar ul-Uloom

With access severely limited for anyone not part of the school community, the Dar ul-Ulooms in the United Kingdom remain a largely unstudied (or at least *under*-studied) phenomenon.[3] Nevertheless, there exist two useful accounts (Geaves 1996 and Birt and Lewis forthcoming) from which we can glean some general sense of the teaching and lifestyles to be found in these institutions. The Dar ul-Uloom founded in Bury in 1975 represented the first full-time school teaching a comprehensive curriculum of Islamic education. The Bury has since gone on to spawn some ten other siblings—a mixture of residential and nonresidential institutions—with each drawing heavily on the model and influence of their progenitor. Strongly rooted in the South Asian tradition, the Dar ul-Ulooms represent an almost direct transplantation of the Deoband system to the UK. Given that the initial impulse among migrants to the UK from the Indian subcontinent in the

1960s and 1970s was to settle in ethnically homogeneous communities segregated from mainstream British society, it is not surprising that the Dar al-Ulooms were among the earliest Islamic educational institutions in the country. It is worth emphasizing that a madrasa education has not been the standard preference of Muslim parents in the UK, even in the early days of settlement. Most parents realized that a traditional religious training provided little in the way of prospective social mobility and employment opportunity in Britain. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Dar ul-Uloom system constituted the education of choice only for the most traditional of families, or those whose family history and social position was predicated on religious expertise. The number of students in the Dar ul-Uloom system is difficult to gauge accurately due to the aforementioned challenges relating to research access, but one might reasonably estimate this at 7,500–10,000–a minute fraction of the British Muslim population.

The curriculum and teaching methods found in the Dar ul-Uloom institutions have until very recently faithfully followed the traditions and practices of Deoband. The emphasis in lower-level core courses is on the direct memorization of Qur'an, hadith, and a variety of foundational texts (*usul al-din*). The chapters by Zaman and Metcalf elsewhere in this volume provide a more expansive overview of the Deoband tradition, and there is very little evidence that during the first decades of their operation, the UK-based Dar ul-Ulooms veered significantly if at all from this model. This raises again the issue of how different cognitive and interactional styles—see Louis Brenner's chapter in this volume—relate to different conceptions of religious education and what it means to be Muslim in Britain. In this case, it is fair to say, "Muslim" and "British" are not understood as covalent signifiers of identity. Islam—or one's "Muslimness"—is best compartmentalized as a separate (presumably primary) and perhaps even incommensurable value system and space of social affiliation.

In more recent years, however, some of the madrasas have started to teach national curriculum subjects such as English, mathematics, and information technology. A good number of these institutions have also joined the Association of Muslim Schools, which has embarked on an outreach effort to provide professional development services to the madrasas in order to widen the range of national curriculum subjects they are permitted to teach. Much of the recent public debate and criticism of the "apartheid" tendencies of Muslim schools has been directed at the madrasas and there are signs that, while a different approach to the teaching of religion may not yet be an option for the Dar ul-Ulooms, all but the most traditional of these institutions is beginning to teach subjects that gesture towards wider conceptions of what constitutes teachable

knowledge in an Islamic setting. In the present context such a move must also be interpreted at least in part as recognition on the part of school leaders of the need to permit some latitude of imagination in terms of Muslim identity in Britain.

Thematizing Islamic Education in a Pluralistic Society

As has been pointed out in the introductory sections of this chapter, there is a sense in which the evolution and multiple trajectories of Islamic education in the UK mirror the experience of British Muslims over the past thirty years. Furthermore, it is possible to detect signs of conventional categories of Islamic education in Britain reconstituting themselves, with the boundaries and distinctions between them increasingly ambiguous. At the higher education level at least, new hybrid models combining elements of traditional Islamic sciences with liberal Islamic studies seem increasingly to be the norm. At the same time, the institutions that teach these seem partially trapped in something of a dilemma. Britain is still an attractive destination for tertiary education, particularly to those from non-Arab countries in the Muslim world seeking to earn a qualification in Islamic Studies in English (particularly one validated by a mainstream British university). At the same time, the educational needs of British (born and bred) Muslims, suggest an emphasis in these same programs on issues and approaches calibrated to local needs. How to deal with this global/local predicament?

At the primary and secondary levels—and to some extent around Islamic education more generally—questions of identity, integration, belonging, and citizenship still circulate. Despite the best efforts of Muslim faith schools to incorporate aspects of civic education, interfaith tolerance, and citizenship into their curricula, suspicions about "segregated" religious education for Muslims and its effects on social cohesion persist. Although this issue is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon, it can be said with relative confidence that Islamic education will continue to function in the years to come as a primary site for the negotiation and contestation of what it means to be a Muslim in the UK and the terms of just how that Muslimness relates to—and, of course, helps to define—the cultural tapestry of a pluralistic Britain. Also important to consider in the coming years will be the question of whether and how the distinct approaches to religious tradition being developed within certain Islamic educational institutions in the West will resonate with and engage debates about Islamic knowledge in the wider Muslim world.

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Notes

1. The British census of 2001 represented the first occasion on which an optional question about religious affiliation was included. Response rates were overwhelming.

2. Two other higher education institutions of Islamic learning worthy of note but beyond the scope of this study are the Islamic College in London and its affiliated Hawza 'Ilmiyya seminary—both leading centers of Shi'a learning—and also the European Institute of Human Sciences in Wales which is closely linked to the ideas of Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

3. See Gilliat-Ray (2005) for an account of one researcher's frustrated attempts to gain access to the Dar ul-Ulooms.

CHAPTER 11

Epilogue: Competing Conceptions of Religious Education

Muhammad Qasim Zaman

The various chapters in this volume have elucidated facets of an evolving Islamic education, its practices and institutions, in a number of cultural and political contexts. How those associated with such institutions articulate their goals is a question implicit in many of these discussions, as are their conceptions of Islamic learning, the practices they seek to inculcate through it, and the contestations that rival conceptions, institutions, and practices—and the diverse contexts in which they are embedded—sometimes lead to. In this epilogue, I address these issues with reference to two additional sets of examples: the Shi'i madrasas of Iran (and to a lesser extent, of Iraq) and the Islamic universities of Saudi Arabia. Institutions of religious education in Iran and Saudi Arabia are very different from each other, as indeed are the specific forms of Islamic belief and practice favored by each state. A comparative look at the discourses on Islamic education in each case helps elucidate these differences; but it also points to some instructive *similarities* in the conceptions that underlie and guide this education. And it reveals the contours of a debate that is as much about religious authority in contemporary Islam as it is about the nature and scope of Islamic learning.

Debating Reform in Shi'i Madrasas

Religious education in the Shi'i madrasas of Iran and Iraq—collectively often referred to as the *hawza* (plural: *hawzāt*) '*ilmiyya* or "enclaves of knowledge"— is typically divided into three stages (Mallat 1993, 39–44; Mottahedeh 1998). The first stage, the *muqaddamat* or "preliminaries," focuses on the study of texts in Arabic grammar and lexicography, rhetoric, and logic. The second stage, the *sutuh*, is concerned with the study of theology, philosophy, substantive law, and legal theory. At the end of the sutuh, the student proceeds to the *dars al-kharij*, the final stage where he attends the advanced lectures of distinguished hawza scholars in training to be a mujtahid, that is, a jurist qualified to arrive at independent legal

decisions. The entire course of education at the hawza has long been characterized by considerable informality, and recent calls by ʻAli Khamene'i—Ayatollah Khomeini's successor since 1989 as Iran's "preeminent jurist" (*wali-i faqih*)—for the rationalization of educational administration suggests that this informality has not altogether ceased to exist (cf. *al-Hawza al-ʻilmiyya* 2002, 167–8).

Informal styles of learning have, in fact, persisted more resolutely, and longer, in Shiʻi scholarly circles than they did among the Sunnis, for instance in South Asia or Egypt. In Egypt, it was typically at the direction of the state that important reforms—the most thoroughgoing of which took place in 1961—were undertaken at the Azhar (Zeghal 1996; and Zeghal, this volume). In South Asia, Deobandi madrasas were established in the wake of the consolidation of British colonial rule as a way of preserving an Islamic identity; and the novelty represented by Deoband's highly structured course of studies—which soon came to also translate itself into the ʻulama's resistance to a continually evolving curriculum—reflected concerns to defend this identity in the face of new religious and political challenges. The pressures of colonial rule did not impinge on the ʻulama of Iraq and Iran as they did on the Deobandi ʻulama of South Asia, and did not necessitate a similar response on any comparable scale. In economic terms, moreover, while the Deobandis, too, have generally remained independent of the state, there is no parallel in Sunni Islam to the sort of independence the Shiʻi ʻulama have long enjoyed. In addition to the zakat, all Shiʻa of means are expected to pay a fifth (*khums*) of their yearly income to a leading religious scholar in his capacity as the representative of the hidden imam, and half of it (*sahm-i imam*) goes toward religious and educational endeavors. This financial institution has been especially effective in reducing the dependence of the Shiʻi scholars on either the pious endowments (whose termination by colonial and postcolonial states was, in many cases, a severe blow to the viability of the Sunni madrasas) or on the patronage of the governing elite. As the recipients of the "share of the imam," leading scholars have traditionally had considerable freedom in determining how these financial resources would be allocated and what educational and other needs would be met through them.

The mujtahids' control of the financial resources pouring into the hawza allowed many new madrasas to be established, but it did not necessarily make for much innovative thinking (a point to which we shall return). Yet efforts to reform the hawza's educational practices have scarcely been lacking during the course of the twentieth century. One such effort took the form of Muntada al-Nashr, an association established in Najaf, the principal seat of Shiʻi religious learning in Iraq, by Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar in 1935 (al-Bahadili 1993, 312–23; Nakash 1994, 262–8; Mervin 2001, 83–5). This association established schools in a number

of Iraqi towns with a view to imparting Islamic education in a more systematic way than was characteristic of the hawza, and to integrating the study of Islam with the modern sciences. It differed from the hawza of Najaf not only in its openness to these sciences, or in a fixed curriculum and other pedagogical practices modeled on the public schools in Iraq, however, but also in its willingness to receive financial support from the government. The government, in turn, recognized the degrees awarded by the Muntada's schools as equivalent to those of its public schools. In 1957, a Kulliyat al-Fiqh (Faculty of Islamic Law) was established in Najaf under the auspices of this association (al-Bahadili 1993, 366–409); it later became part of the University of Baghdad and subsequently of the University of Kufa (ibid., 370). Significantly for an association departing so dramatically from earlier practices, a number of prominent Shi'i religious scholars of Iraq and Lebanon supported this venture, not least by sending their children to study in its schools. For instance, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadl Allah, later the leader of the Hizb Allah of Lebanon, was among those who had studied at a school affiliated with the Muntada (al-Bahadili 1993, 323; Mervin 2001, 83). So, too, was Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (d. 1980), one of the most important Shi'i religious thinkers of the twentieth century (Mallat 1993, 8). Even so, the effort of the reformers to develop an alternative site to the revered hawza 'ilmiyya did not fail to arouse grave misgivings among many 'ulama, and these were exacerbated by its dependence on the state (cf. al-Bahadili 1993, 385–91). Ironically, this dependence did not help it even with the state, which closed down the Kulliyat al-Fiqh as part of its crackdown on the Shi'a in the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1991 (Mervin 2001, 83).

Another important institution, the Madrasat al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya, was founded in 1963 under the patronage of Muhsin al-Hakim (d. 1970), one of the leading Shi'i scholars of the time (al-Bahadili 1993, 342–9). This madrasa, too, sought to reorganize religious education by introducing new texts in a more or less standardized curriculum. As with the Muntada al-Nashr, the goal was to introduce the students to modern intellectual trends alongside the more traditional disciplines, and even to teach the latter with new texts. An important concern of this madrasa was to train its graduates as preachers, to work as such both in Iraq and abroad (al-Bahadili 1993, 342, 345). Unlike the Muntada, the Madrasat al-'Ulum was keen to maintain its distance from the state, which therefore never recognized the qualifications of its graduates; conversely, with a stalwart of the hawza 'ilmiyya as its chief patron, the madrasa, despite the effort to chart a new orientation in the pursuit of learning, remained much closer to the Najaf establishment than the Muntada had ever been.

The moving spirit behind the Madrasat al-'Ulum was the aforementioned Baqir al-Sadr. He is believed to have persuaded al-Hakim to help

establish and support the madrasa, and many of al-Sadr's own books were part of the madrasa's core curriculum. Al-Sadr was also a leading figure in what Chibli Mallat has characterized as the Shi'i "renaissance" of the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike other important figures in Najaf, he was anything but averse to political ambitions; and his ideas may also have exerted some influence on the Iranian constitution following the 1979 revolution (Mallat 1993). The Saddam Hussein regime suspected him of trying to prepare for a revolution akin to that which had brought Khomeini—who had spent much of his own long exile in Najaf—to power; and it was not long after the revolution in Iran that he was executed.

The reformist initiative represented by the Madrasat al-'Ulum was accompanied by a wide-ranging intellectual project whereby al-Sadr sought to reconfigure aspects of the hawza learning as a whole. His books on philosophy, economics, and law were intended to bring the Shi'i 'ulama's scholarly tradition in conversation with modern debates in these areas and to address contemporary issues. Like some other 'ulama of the time, he was also much perturbed by the appeal of Marxism to young, educated Muslims. Some of his writings attempt refutations of Marxist ideas (cf. Mallat 1993, 9–12; Walbridge 2001); and it is possible that the preachers trained at the Madrasat al-'Ulum were intended, in part at least, to combat this appeal. Al-Sadr sought to go beyond an audience of fellow 'ulama, but his writings were also meant to provide texts that even hawza students would find more accessible than the works commonly used in their circles. And his philosophical writings were not only a vehicle for addressing what he saw as pressing contemporary issues but also an effort to more fully integrate the study of philosophy into the curriculum of the hawza students and, indeed, to do so by reducing their dependence on certain age-old philosophical texts (cf. Rifa'i 2000).

Another important call for the reform of Islamic educational institutions and practices came from Murtaza Motahhari (d. 1979), an Iranian scholar likewise deeply immersed in Islamic philosophy (Davari 2005). Motahhari, a product of the hawza 'ilmiyya of Qum in Iran and later a professor in the Faculty of Theology at Tehran University, was a student of 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (d. 1981), the author of the monumental *al-Mizan fi tafsir al-Qur'an*, one of the most important works of Qur'anic exegesis produced in the twentieth century. Tabataba'i had had a distinguished scholarly career in Qum, but it was in philosophy rather than in law that his interests primarily lay. His commentary expounds on the Qur'an from an explicitly philosophical perspective; and it was in the face of some opposition from leading scholars of Qum—including Ayat Allah Husayn Borujerdi (d. 1961), the preeminent religious authority (*marja' al-taqlid*) of the Shi'i world in his time—that he had continued to offer advanced classes in Islamic philosophy to students

of the hawza. As in Baqir al-Sadr's Najaf, younger Iranian 'ulama like Motahhari sought changes in the religious establishment, and Borujerdi's death offered them an opportunity to air their views. These views were most forcefully articulated in an important collection of essays comprising contributions by 'ulama and other religious intellectuals, with Motahhari's analysis of the "Fundamental Problem in the Clerical Establishment" as its centerpiece (Motahhari 1962; 2001).[1]

As the title of his essay suggests, Motahhari's concern was much broader than education, but I would focus here primarily on his diagnosis of the problems besetting Islamic education in the hawza. Advanced Islamic learning had, Motahhari noted, come to be essentially limited to the study of Islamic law, with other important disciplines all but relegated to the margins (Motahhari 2001, 164, 168). But even legal scholarship was not attuned to the changing needs of society (cf. ibid., 164–5, 174–5). The principal reason for the hawza's conservatism, as Motahhari saw it, was the 'ulama's dependence on the financial support of the people. Though it made them independent of the state, even the leading 'ulama were averse to taking risks for fear of offending a religiously conservative populace and thus of jeopardizing the principal source of their revenues. Rulings had to be given, and studies conducted, along familiar lines, because people expected the 'ulama to continue doing so. Since the stature of a mujtahid depended, in part at least, on the number of his followers, while the latter were free, theoretically, to shift their allegiance from one mujtahid to another, the competition for leadership among the scholars meant barely concealed efforts to please the people by meeting rather than challenging their expectations. It also meant devoting considerable energies to the production of "manuals of correct practice" that appealed to the ordinary believer but had little scholarly merit (cf. ibid., 172). This populism was a "plague," Motahhari said, and it had sapped the energies of the Shi'i religious establishment.

This was a remarkable critique of the educational and other practices of the 'ulama, all the more so for having come out of the hawza itself. It was thoroughly polemical in intent, however, which means that it was less than willing to recognize the changes that the 'ulama's discourses had, in fact, continued to undergo in the hawzas of Iran and Iraq. For all the objections of the senior 'ulama, Motahhari's teacher, Tabataba'i, had, after all, not only written a major philosophical work on the Qur'an but had also established a study circle in Islamic philosophy in Qum itself. Baqir al-Sadr and, indeed, Motahhari himself were, of course, products of the hawza milieu themselves, and both were as notable for the breadth of their scholarship as for the intellectual risks they took. And less than a decade after the publication of Motahhari's critique, another of his teachers, Khomeini, had called for a major reevaluation of the Shi'i 'ula-

ma's quietist orientation in a context that was none other than his advanced lectures in the hawza of Najaf. Motahhari, however, believed that it was not the accomplishment of the individual so much as the *institutional framework* in which he operated that made for sound practices, which means that any number of individual innovations would not, for him, have sufficed as an argument against the need for thoroughgoing institutional reform:

> The relationship between social organizations and institutions and the individual members in the society is analogous to the relationship between the street, alleys, and houses of a city to its people and their means of transportation in that city. The street design and city planning of each town limit its inhabitants' choices of routes from one point in the city to another. . . . Their greatest freedom is in their ability to choose among the available options. . . . If such a city has developed gradually, without any design or city planning and not according to any fundamental principles, the inhabitants have no choices but to adapt their lives to the status quo. As a result, their movement, as well as the management of the city, is very difficult. Within the structural limitations of this town, the individuals cannot do much. All they can accomplish is minor change in the existing streets, alleys, and houses of this town to alleviate their problems. (ibid., 165–6)

What Motahhari was describing here, though he did not put it this way, are, of course, the constraints that a long established tradition imposes on those working within its parameters. And he saw these constraints as deplorable not only because they were excessively severe but also because, in being tied to the 'ulama's financial interests, they had ceased to be *intellectually* respectable.

The sort of thoroughgoing reorientation Motahhari had boldly called for in the hawza never came about. A different reorientation—though Motahhari's reformist vision for the hawza, as distinguished from his religious and political thought in general, had little discernible impact on it—took place, however, with the Iranian Revolution of 1979. In his critique of the religious establishment, Motahhari had briefly noted the dangers of the 'ulama's financial dependence on the state, as exemplified by the Azhar of Egypt (cf. ibid., 172). But much of his polemic was, as noted, devoted to the "plague" of the Shi'i 'ulama's populism. The 1979 revolution dramatically changed this situation, with leading 'ulama coming to wield direct and unprecedented political power. The intellectual justification for the 'ulama's leadership had been most powerfully offered by Khomeini in his 1970 lectures in Najaf, where he had argued that the obligation to implement the shari'a in all its dimensions could not await the reappearance of the twelfth imam—as most Shi'i scholars had long held—but, rather, that it was the responsibility of those most knowledgeable in

God's law, the 'ulama, to do so. The most eminent of the 'ulama had, he insisted, the authority to deputize for the hidden imam in all aspects of life, including the political (Algar 1981, 27–166). This doctrine of the authority of the preeminent jurist (wilayat al-faqih) is now enshrined in the Iranian constitution. But it has also continued to be much contested by leading 'ulama in Iran and Iraq (cf. Akhavi 1996) as well as by other "new religious intellectuals."[2] Significantly, but not surprisingly, debates on the 'ulama's educational institutions and practices have typically come to be part of larger arguments about religious authority and specifically about the wilayat al-faqih. One illustration of how a critique of the hawza in postrevolution Iran relates to this larger debate comes from a lecture on "What the University Expects from the Hawzeh," delivered at the University of Isfahan in 1992 by 'Abdolkarim Soroush, a prominent Iranian religious intellectual with a secular educational background (2000, 171–83).

A key theme in Soroush's critique of the wilayat al-faqih is his distinction between "religion" and "religious knowledge." The foundational texts (which, for the Shi'a, include not only the Qur'an and the normative example of the Prophet Muhammad but also the teachings of the Shi'i imams) are the sphere of the former, whereas "religious knowledge" is the cumulative result of the efforts to interpret these texts and teachings. Unlike religion itself, then, this knowledge is historically contingent, fallible, and therefore in need of constant reevaluation (cf. Soroush 2000, 30–8). Claims to the preeminent authority of the jurist (*wilayat al-faqih*) occlude this distinction, however, rendering infallible judgments that ought to be recognized as merely human. A similar conflation characterizes the 'ulama's scholarly culture in the hawza, with the sanctity that ought to be reserved only for "religion" enveloping their discourses in general.

Like Motahhari, Soroush also laments the 'ulama's populism, which makes them averse to challenging beliefs commonly accepted among the people or to critiquing works revered by them: "Why is the Hawzeh so insensitive to many unreliable or forged traditions, superstitious tales, and offensive banalities that are printed in books and uttered on the pulpit? What purpose do these serve except sustaining the superficial and superstitious religiosity of the masses? . . . I am not implying that the Hawzeh should alter the existing books without the permission of their authors. These books have historical value and must be preserved in their present form; after all, they reflect the traditional beliefs and activities of our people. [But] if the contemporary Hawzeh does not share those beliefs, let it critique and revise them" (ibid., 180–1).

The effects both of considering the totality of its discourses sacrosanct and of its populism are aggravated by the religious establishment's as-

sumption of political power in the aftermath of the revolution. Motahhari's critique of the hawza had not anticipated this problem, and he died shortly after the revolution. It is, however, at the center of Soroush's concerns. That the presumed inviolability of the 'ulama's assertions is now backed by the state means, Soroush says, that serious intellectual challenges are met not by new ways of debating problems and of finding solutions, as the culture of the secular university aspires, at least ideally, to do, but by repression. Ideas that challenge long established views among the people have likewise come to be backed by political authority. And where Motahhari had linked the 'ulama's populism to their economic interests, Soroush implies that the 'ulama's newly acquired political authority gives them even greater stakes in not challenging antiquated, "superstitious" beliefs. The result is that efforts towards social reform—for example, on the matter of the position of women—are continually thwarted through the force of these unexamined traditional views (ibid., 181–2).

Soroush is as far-reaching in his critique, and as unsparing as was Motahhari. He writes very much as an *outsider*, however. Where Motahhari was a distinguished product of the hawza, Soroush has an advanced degree in pharmacology. Soroush's interest is, moreover, in what the hawza ought to learn *from* the university, of whose culture of critical intellectual engagement he sees himself as a representative, not vice versa. Though Soroush is hardly lacking in significance, especially as part of a larger "reformist" trend increasingly wary of the authoritarianism built into the doctrine of wilayat al-faqih (Keddie 2003, 305–11), his status as an outsider to the hawza no doubt exacts some cost in terms of the resonance of his ideas *within* it. 'Ali Khamene'i, Khomeini's successor as the preeminent jurist, was no doubt thinking of intellectuals like Soroush when he emphasized, in a speech marking the commencement of the hawza's academic year in 1999, that the hawza alone is the true center of Islamic learning. "This does not mean that those not associated with the hawzas have no right to think about or study Islamic issues, for the question here is not that of a 'right' or the lack thereof. Rather, it is only in the hawza that the prerequisites for such study are abundantly at hand. It is every human being's right to become a physician. But one who wants to become a physician ought to enter a faculty of medicine, for one can hardly seek the relevant knowledge in a place lacking a teacher, . . . a laboratory, . . . and the practitioners of the profession. The proper place for the understanding of religion, and for specialization in issues pertaining to it, is [likewise] the hawza" (*al-Hawza al-'ilmiyya* 2002, 181).

As this statement makes clear, 'Ali Khamene'i is no friend of new religious intellectuals like Soroush, though even the 'ulama critical of policies endorsed by the "preeminent jurist" have not escaped reprisals (Keddie 2003, 307–8). Significantly, however, Khamene'i himself has also spoken

of the need for reform in the hawza, and some of these statements add yet another perspective to the discourses on Shi'i higher learning in the contemporary world.[3]

Khamene'i professes to be convinced of the importance of keeping the hawza independent of the state, even of an Islamic state (*al-Hawza al-'ilmiyya* 2002, 165). Yet his vision for the hawza is inseparable from the Islamic state in at least two fundamental ways. First, he notes that though the hawza has long needed certain reforms, they have previously been largely avoided on the grounds that the state was hostile to this institution and the governing elite would simply "swallow up" the hawza in the name of reform; that argument no longer holds in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution (cf. ibid., 164–5). Second, and this brings us to the sort of reform he has in mind, he calls on those associated with the hawza to reorient their scholarly activities. As Motahhari had also complained, much of the 'ulama's intellectual energy is spent on Islamic substantive law (fiqh), with other disciplines often getting little or no attention. Khamene'i mentions ethics as one of the areas much neglected in the hawza (ibid., 150–1). But even in matters of fiqh, he observes, scholars have barely addressed issues of contemporary relevance, for instance matters of economics, criminal law, and war (ibid., 155–6). Such matters were of little interest to Shi'i scholars at an earlier time, but the establishment of the Islamic state has brought them to center stage. "You are aware of the painstaking attention our jurists gave to matters of purity, prayer, and other rituals—all this because their minds were alive and active. . . . But some [today] ask: Why all this attention to such matters [now]? For the reality is that the priorities today are not the same as those of yesterday. New issues have come to the fore today and they deserve their share of attention" (ibid., 156).

Another aspect of the reform Khamene'i calls for relates to the texts long studied in the hawza (ibid., 169–72). These texts have no divine authority, as he dramatically puts it, and the obscure style in which many of them are written wastes the time of the students today. Students at the hawza ought to have the opportunity to learn foreign languages; but this is only possible with a reduction in the years it takes to complete a hawza education and to do that requires, in turn, the use of more efficient, less cumbersome texts. Khamene'i's recognition of the need for new texts in the hawza has some similarities with Soroush's call for the critique and revision of texts traditionally much favored by the 'ulama. There is an important difference between the two, however. Khamene'i's complaint is that the style and language of the texts is antiquated and thus a hindrance to efficiently acquiring the knowledge they are meant to impart. The *content* of that knowledge remains important and relevant, for all that the 'ulama also need to attend to new questions that have come forth

in the contemporary world. For Soroush, on the other hand, the texts are only part of the problem. It is the content itself that is "superstitious" and needs to be critiqued; all they have is "historical value," precisely as mere relics of the past rather than as constitutive of an ongoing tradition. This crucial difference between Soroush and Khamene'i notwithstanding, Khamene'i's approach to the hawza's texts—like that of Baqir al-Sadr—itself represents a distinctly modern view. For while particular texts have, of course, often been considered dispensable, and relatively new texts have sometimes replaced older works in the 'ulama's study circles (see Zaman, this volume; Litvak 1998, 39), it is through the mastery of well-established texts that a scholarly tradition has typically been constituted and passed on. Attention to the subtleties of style and language is, moreover, not a mere distraction from engaging with the substantive issues—or, as Khamene'i puts it, the sort of knowledge that the jurist might need "once in twenty years" (*al-Hawza al-ilmiyya* 2002, 172)—but a means, rather, of initiating the student into the tradition's established modes of discourse. As a product of the hawza, Khamene'i is, of course, intimately aware of all this, which is precisely what underscores some of the ways in which he breaks with the history of the 'ulama's scholarly culture. His conservative view of the new religious intellectuals does not, then, sum up his view of the hawza itself any more than it does of the 'ulama's scholarly tradition.

Among the "new" emphases Khamene'i seeks for the hawza is not only a reoriented fiqh but also proselytism (*tabligh*). By proselytism, he means the preaching of Islam to non-Muslims, though it seems not to exclude efforts to inculcate a stronger sense of Islamic commitment among fellow Muslims. This effort is anything but new, of course. After all, it was only through the sustained efforts of the 'ulama, in many cases brought to Iran from other Shi'i centers after the establishment of the Safavid dynasty in 1501, that Iran had become a predominantly Shi'i country in the first place. The Shi'i 'ulama likewise played an important role in the conversion of the southern Iraqi tribes to Shi'ism in the nineteenth century (Nakash 1994, 25–43; Litvak 1998, 129–34). To take a different and more recent example, in Pakistan, Shi'i and Sunni preachers have competed for several decades to win the adherence of the rural populace to a new, text-based, self-consciously "Sunni" or "Shi'i" identity—a competition that is part of, and has fueled, ongoing sectarian violence in Pakistan (Zaman 1998). The Madrasat al-'Ulum in Najaf, which embodied some of Baqir al-Sadr's reformist ideas and centered on many of his own books, was likewise especially attentive to proselytism, as we have observed. Khamene'i, however, wants to go further, and to accord to proselytism the respectability of an independent discipline. Some of the other changes he envisions in the hawza are themselves geared, at least in part, towards

proselytizing ends. Learning foreign languages, for instance, is a way of becoming acquainted with the cultural and intellectual trends that shape the preacher's audience. As he puts it, "Most people are not capable of building bridges of communication with those they address. The addressee needs to be understood most intricately, and it is for the administrators of the hawza to provide for the activities, the efficiency, and the planning towards this end" (*al-Hawza al-ilmiyya* 2002, 183).

To the extent that proselytism is directed against insufficiently committed fellow Muslims, or against rival religious trends, Khamene'i's vision can be construed as a response to the diatribes of Motahhari and Soroush against the "plague" of the 'ulama's populism. The 'ulama ought, that is, to learn more effective means of communicating with others and to acquire a better sense of the ideas and trends they seek to combat. But Khamene'i leaves little doubt that, for him, there is no substitute for the guidance they alone can provide to the people, just as there is no evading *their* obligation to provide it. The principal focus of tabligh lies, however, among the non-Muslims and, presumably, among non-Shi'i Muslims, and here we are brought back to the deep connection that the 1979 revolution has forged between the hawza and the Islamic state. For the state can now provide unprecedented resources for the propagation of its favored "Islamic" causes, and the postrevolution state has, indeed, done much to do so. At one level, Khamene'i's call for change in the hawza can be construed simply as an appeal to the 'ulama to seize the new opportunities that have become available to them and to reorient their activities accordingly.

The Islamic Universities of Saudi Arabia

As institutions concerned not just with higher Islamic learning but also with proselytism, the hawzas and their affiliates have competed for several decades with a very different vision of Islam, sponsored and disseminated by Saudi Arabia. The Islamic universities of Saudi Arabia are among the major sites where this understanding of Islam is inculcated, and it is on these that I briefly focus here.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and as part of the global War on Terror, Saudi politics and policies have received minute attention from American and international policy analysts as well as from other observers. This is not only because fifteen of the nineteen men involved in the hijackings on September 11 were Saudi nationals, but also because of the Saudi royal family's long-standing public commitment to the teachings of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1791), which represent one of the more stringent forms of belief and practice in modern Islam. Those

committed to these teachings prefer to characterize themselves not as "Wahhabis"—which they see as a term of abuse—but rather as "Salafis," that is, as people devoted to the normative example of the pious "forbears" (*salaf*) of early Islam; more often, however, they see themselves simply as "true" Muslims, with the implication, of course, that other "Muslims" are believers only in name and thus no better than non-Muslims, who themselves are typically seen with no great enthusiasm. A great deal has been written, mostly by Western journalists, on Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of September 11; and the charitable foundations supported by the Saudi state and, more often, by individual Saudis, have received extensive scrutiny for suspected ties to terrorist activities. How Islam and other religious traditions are taught in Saudi schools has also received some attention (cf. Doumato 2003). For all their centrality to the articulation of Islamic discourses and to the training of the 'ulama, the Islamic universities of Saudi Arabia have, however, been largely passed over in silence so far.

Given the strong ideological orientation of the state, all educational institutions in the country profess an Islamic identity. But three Saudi public universities have been established specifically for the study of Islam: the Islamic University of Medina, the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud Islamic University in Riyadh, and the Umm al-Qura University in Mecca. Each has a somewhat different orientation. Of the three universities, the Imam Muhammad University (est. 1974) has, for instance, been most keenly engaged in proselytism, training preachers and sending them abroad, establishing links with Islamic centers in different parts of the world, and coordinating the activities of Islamic institutes within the kingdom (al-Madani 2003, 191–6). Though all Islamic universities have their faculties of the shari'a, the Imam Muhammad University has been especially important in the training of the Saudi judges; and it remains the largest of the Islamic universities in terms of its student population (al-Madani 2003, 191–2). The ideological vision informing these universities is, however, best illustrated with reference to the first of them to be established, in Medina in 1961.[4]

The Islamic University of Medina was founded, as a Saudi royal decree put it, for "the formation of scholars ('ulama) specializing in the Islamic and Arabic sciences . . . and equipped with the forms of knowledge that would enable them to call others to Islam and to solve the problems that confront Muslims in their religious and worldly matters in accordance with the Book [of God], the normative example [of the Prophet] and the practices of the pious forbears" (al-Madani 2003, 196). To this end, the university has historically drawn most of its students from abroad: 71 percent of its more than 5,000 students in 1995–96 were non-Saudis (al-Madani 2003, 201). The university comprises five faculties. The "faculty

of the shari'a" teaches substantive law and legal theory, Islamic law in a comparative perspective, judicial administration (*al-qada*) and its history, and "politics according to shari'a norms" (*siyasa shar'iyya*), by which is meant Saudi laws not based on the shari'a but assumed to be guided by its general principles (cf. Vogel 2000). The "proselytism and the foundations of religion faculty" seeks to inculcate an understanding of Islamic beliefs as a prelude to preaching them to others; the "true" Islamic beliefs are, for their part, taught not only in their own right and in light of the life of the Prophet and the history of Islam, but also with reference to "wayward" Muslim and non-Muslim views. The remaining faculties are concerned with the Arabic language, the study of the Qur'an and its exegesis, and the study of the reported teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (al-Madani 2003, 197–9).

It has seldom been noticed that the vision underlying the Islamic University of Medina is indebted not just to Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi Islam, but also to the Pakistani ideologue Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi (d. 1979), one of the most influential Islamist thinkers of the twentieth century. Some background on this point is in order here. Mawdudi was the author of a major commentary on the Qur'an and of numerous works on Islamic law. He wrote primarily in the context of the Hanafi school of law, to which most Muslims of South Asia belong, whereas the Saudis are, for the most part, adherents of the Hanbali school of law, as refracted through the teachings of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. This did not diminish his appeal in the relevant Saudi quarters, however. Hanbali scholars have historically been more willing than the Hanafis to derive their legal norms directly from the foundational texts rather than through the mediation of the agreed-upon methods of particular schools of law; and the Wahhabi orientation has helped weaken the authority of the school of law, especially in more recent times (cf. Vogel 2000, 78). Inasmuch as a direct recourse to the foundational texts in deriving legal and moral norms is a hallmark of Islamist approaches to the Qur'an, Mawdudi, despite his South Asian Hanafi context, had many affinities with the Wahhabi approach. His lack of a *formal* religious education—itself a modern requirement through which the 'ulama have come to regulate their boundaries—troubled the Saudi 'ulama much less than it did the Deobandis of South Asia; and the patronage of the Saudi state made for a very different relationship with the Saudi 'ulama from what he had with the Deobandis of South Asia (on the Deobandi 'ulama's criticism of Mawdudi for, inter alia, "Wahhabi" proclivities, cf. Nasr 1996, 118). Mawdudi was an honored and influential figure in Saudi Arabia; he was also the first recipient of the Faysal Award, named after King Faysal (d. 1975) of Saudi Arabia and instituted by the state to recognize what it takes to be outstanding service to Islam.

Sometime before the establishment of the Islamic University of Medina in 1961, Mawdudi had submitted a brief "sketch" of such a university to the Saudi government (Mawdudi 1963). The Islamic university should have a very clear mission, he wrote, and this was to "prepare pious scholars (ʻulama) who are capable of providing, in this modern age, correct guidance to the world in accordance with the true religion" (ibid., 157). The university ought to focus on the "Islamic sciences," with any other disciplines taught only to the extent that they assist the former. The university would be a residential community, open to Muslims from all over the world, cultivating an Islamic ethos and seeking to protect itself against "the influence of Western culture" (ibid., 158). Those teaching at the university ought to be appointed not only on the basis of their academic qualifications, therefore, but also in view of the soundness of their beliefs; and it is not just the faculty's own practices but also those of their families that would have to conform to shariʻa norms if they are to serve as exemplars to the students (ibid., 159).

Mawdudi proposed a nine-year long course of studies at the university, divided into three stages (ibid., 160–5). The first, "undergraduate," stage (though he did not call it that), was to last for four years and would be concerned with Islamic beliefs in light of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet; the "totality of the Islamic way of life"; the study of the entire Qur'an with a brief exegesis though *without* reliance on any particular exegetical text; hadith, with reference to one of its medieval collections; Islamic law; Islamic history; the social sciences, in particular economics, politics, and sociology; world religions; "a brief history of modern Western thought"; and a European language. Mawdudi proposed the establishment of five faculties at the level of the three-year long graduate stage: Qur'anic exegesis; hadith; Islamic law; theology; and Islamic history (concerned not only with the history of early Islam but also with the impact of Western colonialism on Muslim societies and the Islamic revivalist movements). The third and final stage, which Mawdudi envisaged as lasting for two years, would consist of specialized research in any of the areas with which the five graduate faculties were concerned.

The scope of studies at the Islamic University of Medina is much broader than Mawdudi had envisioned it: for instance, it has a doctoral program, of which he had not spoken, as well as research academies (separate from the aforementioned faculties) devoted to the study of hadith and to the "revival of the Islamic heritage" (al-Madani 2003, 202–4). Nor can we be sure that Mawdudi's blueprint for an Islamic university reflects his own, independent vision rather than echoing broader discussions among the Saudi ʻulama and policy makers about the contours of this first Islamic university in the kingdom. The parallels between Mawdudi's vision and the structure of the university that came to be estab-

lished in Medina are nonetheless striking: no less than four of the five faculties of the university mirror what Mawdudi had laid down in the document he had submitted to the Saudi authorities. Yet even if it is not under his guidance that the university was established, Mawdudi's proposal would testify to a vision of higher Islamic education that he shared with the Wahhabi 'ulama and policy makers of the mid-twentieth century. The significance of this vision lies not only in its desire to produce "good" Muslims and to promote Islam in the world through them and with the backing of the state; it is also important for conceiving of a new kind of 'ulama—products not of traditional madrasas but of modern, albeit Islamic, universities—who alone would be able to challenge and reverse processes of Westernization. As Mawdudi had put it, the traditionally educated 'ulama were, at best, capable of serving as inefficient "brakes" on the path to Westernization; but the community needed someone new in the *driver's seat*, to turn the vehicle around from non- or anti-Islamic directions to properly Islamic ones. He envisioned the Islamic university as providing such drivers (Mawdudi 1963, 155–6; the words "brakes" and "driver" are both transliterated in Mawdudi's Urdu). Institutions producing what Mawdudi would have characterized as mere "brakes" have a long history in the Arabian peninsula, however (Mortel 1997), and the Saudi state has itself often provided financial support to madrasas elsewhere (cf. Zaman 2002, 173–7). The history of one prominent madrasa in Mecca illustrates how they have fared *within* Saudi Arabia.

The Sawlatiyya madrasa was established in Mecca in 1875 by Sawlat al-Nisa, a wealthy Indian woman from Calcutta. Its first principal was Rahmat Allah Kayranawi, a scholar with Deobandi leanings and probably the most famous Muslim polemicist against Christian missionaries in the history of modern South Asia (cf. Powell 1993). Kayranawi is said to have had some involvement in the anti-British Indian Mutiny of 1857, and he emigrated to Mecca not long after the consolidation of British colonial rule following the mutiny. A few years later, he was invited to Constantinople by the Ottoman sultan to help combat the influence of some of the same Christian missionaries he had once debated in India (cf. Powell 1993, 292–6). He died in Mecca in 1891.

The organizational structure characteristic of the madrasa at Deoband and its affiliates throughout India was largely replicated at the Sawlatiyya madrasa. Its fixed curriculum and its system of examinations stood in considerable contrast with the informal manner in which study circles had long been held within the precincts of the Sacred Mosque in Mecca (cf. al-Ghamidi and 'Abdallah 2002, 308). In 1912, under the direction of Kayranawi's nephew, and in a departure even from most Indian madrasas, the Sawlatiyya also introduced mathematics, history and geography into the curriculum (al-Ghamidi and 'Abdallah 2002, 308; cf. al-

Saqqa 1978, 44–87). But irrespective of the esteem in which its graduates are said to have been held, the rise of modern Saudi Arabia did not bode well for madrasas such as the Sawlatiyya. The fluctuating private donations that constituted the principal source of the madrasa's revenues had always made for financial uncertainty, and this seems to have increased over time (cf. al-Ghamidi and 'Abdallah 2002, 309). An institution bearing indelible marks of its foreign origins would, moreover, be anomalous under any circumstances, but especially in the context of a modern state. Already in the late nineteenth century, an Ottoman governor of the Hijaz had noted that the madrasas of Mecca and Medina were "full of Indians, Javanese and Turks, which means that the learning dispensed here only benefits foreigners" (Deringil 1998, 98–9). But a state—and its religious elite—committed not just to a particular view of Islam but also to its sustained dissemination abroad could not have seen such private madrasas with anything but profound distrust. The Islamic University of Medina has also largely sought to "benefit foreigners," of course, but in a very different way than madrasas like the Sawlatiyya. Between 1907 and 1926, the Sawlatiyya's program of studies had extended over fourteen years; by 1958, however, that is, three years before the establishment of the Islamic University of Medina, the Sawlatiyya madrasa had largely been reduced to the level of a four-year long Qur'an school (al-Ghamidi and 'Abdallah 2002, 308–9).

If the virtual extinction of madrasas such as the Sawlatiyya illustrate something about the homogenizing vision of Wahhabi Islam and of the state working in tandem with it, the establishment of the Islamic universities shows the confidence—but also the relative ease—with which educational experimentation has taken place in Saudi Arabia. For all the aspiration to return to the austere Islam of the pious forbears (salaf), the manner in which the Islamic universities have sought to do so is distinctly modern. The novelty of these institutions does not lie in the channeling of the state's resources towards the propagation of particular Islamic views: while the global scale of this effort is, of course, unprecedented, Saudi Islamic universities bear comparison with the vast educational complexes endowed by rulers and notables in medieval Muslim societies (cf. Arjomand 1999). The peculiarity consists, rather, in their approach to Islam. It is remarkable, for instance, that few people associated with these universities write commentaries of the sort sometimes still produced in the madrasas of Pakistan or the hawzas of Iran and Iraq.[5] Instead, numerous master's theses and Ph.D. dissertations take the form of annotated editions of medieval collections of hadith and of works of law.[6] Many other dissertations are devoted to the life and work of particular medieval (and, occasionally, modern) scholars or to intellectual trends or practices in terms of which aspects of the Wahhabi creed might be

explicated. Such studies often take a "thematic" approach to their subject matter, resembling, at least formally, the carefully circumscribed topics that dissertations in Western universities typically explore.[7] What they also illustrate, however, is a changed view of the Islamic tradition: the concern here is not to engage in an ongoing conversation with interlocutors from the past—as is the case, for instance, in the commentary of the early twentieth-century Deobandi scholar Anwarshah Kashmiri (see Zaman, this volume)—but rather to selectively *retrieve* and disseminate particular facets of what is implicitly recognized as a bygone rather than a continuing tradition.

This retrieval is heavily weighted towards the Hanbali school of law: fourteen Ph.D. dissertations and forty-four Master's theses were written on topics relating to the hadith collection of Ibn Hanbal (d. 855), the founder of the Hanbali school, in the Saudi Islamic universities between 1973 and 2000. The emphasis on the Hanbali school stands in sharper relief when we consider that, during the same period, only one Master's thesis was written on the (admittedly meager) hadith reports attributed to the founder of the Hanafi school of law, Abu Hanifa (d. 767); four Master's theses and one Ph.D. on the hadith reported by Malik (d. 795), the founder of the Maliki school; and three Master's theses on the hadith reported by al-Shafi'i (d. 820), the founder of the school of Sunni law that bears his name (see 'Atiyya, Hafani, and Yusuf 1995, 2:529–58; Yusuf 2003, 2:874–903). But even the Hanbali school does not constrain the discourses of the 'ulama, in these universities and beyond. Motahhari's analogy between the scholarly tradition and the layout of an ancient city, whose "street design and . . . planning . . . limit its inhabitants' choices of routes from one point in the city to another, [so that their] greatest freedom is in their ability to choose among the available options" holds as much for the Shi'i 'ulama of Iran and Iraq as it does for the Deobandis of South Asia, but it applies less well to the 'ulama of Saudi Arabia. The view of the tradition many Saudi 'ulama hold is much narrower, comprising the foundational texts and the practices of the earliest Muslims as understood by a few later commentators. At one level, of course, this makes for fewer available options to choose from and for a notorious rigidity in sticking to them. Yet it is worth noting that the Saudi 'ulama and judges have also remained resolutely committed to the idea of ijtihad, understood here as the derivation of rulings with reference to the foundational texts even *irrespective* of the methods and the mediating scholarly discourses of the dominant legal tradition (cf. Vogel 2000). Such a view does not necessarily, or even usually, lead to liberal outcomes; but it clearly does not constrain the Saudi 'ulama and judges in the way, as Motahhari observes, it does the Shi'i 'ulama.

It is precisely because of the narrow view the Wahhabis take of the Islamic tradition that the Saudi political authorities have themselves had a relatively free hand in fashioning their Islamic universities, a freedom that stands in marked contrast with the gingerly manner in which successive Pakistani governments have pursued efforts to reform madrasas. Ironically, however, the Saudi state's control over religious education has not translated into an ability to effectively regulate the products of that education. For the view of law to which both the 'ulama and the Saudi political establishment profess to be committed allows, at least in principle, the scholar and the judge to exercise ijtihad independently not just of the existing legal tradition but *also* of the king's own decrees (cf. Vogel 2000, 107, 175–6 and passim). What the "drivers" produced by the Saudi Islamic universities—to return to Mawdudi's metaphor—regard as the properly Islamic direction is not necessarily what the state sees as serving its best interests, and vice versa.

There is little evidence of the sort of debate on the scope and direction of higher Islamic learning in Saudi Arabia that we saw with reference to the hawzas of Iran and Iraq. Even when prominent Islamist dissidents have arisen from within the Islamic universities, it is the failure of the Saudi ruling elite to live up to their Islamic commitments, or of the leading scholars to adequately admonish them for such failings, *not* the inadequacies of the Islamic universities, that they have most often spoken about (cf. Zaman 2002, 155–9). The discourses of certain prominent Salafis elsewhere in the contemporary Muslim world do occasionally point, however, to a vision of higher Islamic learning that diverges in certain important respects from what the Saudi Islamic universities have to offer even as it endorses much else in these universities. This partially divergent vision is best represented by the Egyptian religious scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi (see Zeghal, this volume; Zaman 2005), arguably the most visible of the 'ulama in the contemporary Muslim world.

Qaradawi is a product not of one of the Saudi Islamic universities but rather of the Azhar of Egypt. Since the late nineteenth century, al-Azhar has been the object of repeated government efforts towards reform, the most ambitious of which, in 1961, led to the establishment of several new faculties devoted to the modern, secular sciences and to the restructuring of the program of studies even for the Islamic disciplines. Qaradawi had completed the studies qualifying him for the status of an accredited religious scholar ('alim) prior to these wide-ranging reforms, though he received his Ph.D. from the Azhar a decade or so after these reforms had been in effect. He has lived in Qatar since the early 1960s, but there is little doubt that, even from a distance, he has been shaped by the transformations the Azhar has undergone. Indeed, his recently published autobiography would seem to suggest that, in his student days in Egypt, he was

in the vanguard of those seeking change in the Azhar and its affiliated institutions.

The problem with these institutions of Qaradawi's youth, as he describes them in his autobiography, was the utter irrelevance of much of what the students were expected to imbibe. Speaking of a work of Hanafi substantive law that was part of the curriculum at the institution he was studying at in Tanta, Egypt, Qaradawi writes:

> The shortcoming of this book, and of other texts of the Hanafi and other schools, is that it was written for an age that has passed. It was not written for our age, or for treating our difficulties, or for answering our questions. The shortcoming is not that of the authors of these books, for they did, indeed, strive the best they could . . . to treat their problems in the language of their age (*bi-lughat 'asrihim*). The shortcoming is ours, for we study a body of substantive law, from A to Z . . . , that is entirely theoretical, one that lives in books but not in the realities of actual life. We study books on [the legal topics of] sales and on transactions, but we know nothing about contemporary forms of commercial transaction; we don't know what happens in the banks and what is permissible or forbidden about them; we know nothing about insurance companies and the [Islamic] rules governing them. Even in matters of ritual, we know nothing about the [obligatory] zakat tax on companies, on factories, on residential buildings, or on other contemporary forms of capital growth. (al-Qaradawi 2002–04, 1:222)

In theology, likewise, students were introduced to lifeless disputations with little attention to their relevance in the modern age or to new questions that needed to be addressed. More grievously, as Qaradawi sees it, there was little effort to teach students how to examine and debate theological difficulties with reference to the foundational texts or to imbibe the Qur'an's simple yet effective manner of addressing theological questions (al-Qaradawi 2002–04, 1:186–7). Qaradawi laments the lack of serious attention to the study of the Qur'an and of hadith at the Azhar and its institutes in his student days; and he notes the absence of an "Islamic proselytizing spirit" (*ruh al-da'wa*) even in the teaching of the religious sciences (al-Qaradawi 2002–04, 1:234–5).

The call for a reorientation of Islamic learning towards the foundational texts, the distaste for outmoded legal handbooks, and the foregrounding of the "proselytizing spirit" reveal facets not only of Qaradawi's Salafi leanings but also of his affinity with the approach of the Saudi Islamic universities. Yet he also makes clear that any simple Salafi or Wahhabi approach would not do, if that means merely a "return" to the foundational texts and to the practices of the pious forbears. The need to address people and their problems in "the language of the age" is a constant refrain in his discourses; and while he insists that this "language"

must be suffused with guidance from the foundational texts, he also recognizes the importance of modern forms of knowledge and, indeed, of contemporary Western languages. Here it is the example of al-Azhar, not that of the Islamic universities of Saudi Arabia, that clearly guides him.

At almost exactly the time that the Azhar was undergoing its thoroughgoing reforms, Qaradawi had assumed, in 1961, the directorship of an Islamic institute of secondary education in Qatar (cf. al-Qaradawi 2002–04, 2:319). Indeed, as he describes it in his autobiography, he was well ahead of the Azhar in introducing new texts for the study of Islam as well as the modern sciences at his institute. Instructive here is his account of a meeting with Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Al al-Shaykh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and the first president of the Islamic University of Medina (see his obituary by ʻAbd al-ʻAziz Bin Baz, himself the first vice president, then president, of Medina's Islamic University and later also the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, in al-Musa 2002, 450–8). The meeting took place in 1963, while Qaradawi was visiting Saudi Arabia with a group of students from his Islamic institute. On being asked by Muhammad ibn Ibrahim about this institute, Qaradawi described it as "combining the old and the new, with the students studying almost everything of the sciences, mathematics, and English that are studied in other schools, but with the addition of extensive studies in Arabic and the shariʻa sciences." When Muhammad b. Ibrahim asked if these "modern sciences" adversely affected the student's normal schedule of studies in the shariʻa, Qaradawi recalls responding: "Indeed, but we have no choice in the matter. For the student should not [have to] live dissociated from his age. If he is destined to preach or to issue fatwas, he should be knowledgeable about the world of those to whom he preaches and he should be able to speak to them in their language. . . . As Ibn Qayyim [a medieval Hanbali jurist much revered by the Wahhabis and the Salafis] has said, 'a true jurist is one who joins the 'obligatory' to the 'actual'. . . . The Azhar has already reshaped its institutes, added foreign languages to them, and expanded [the teaching of] the modern sciences. We cannot but live in our own age." (al-Qaradawi 2002–04, 2:441)

This spirited defense of his, and the Azhar's, educational innovation is also a thinly veiled critique, of course, of the more stringent Salafi approaches to higher Islamic learning; and it may not be too much to see it as a critique of the Saudi Islamic universities not only in the early 1960s, when the first of them was established, but also at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when Qaradawi began publishing his autobiography. Just how far reaching the implications of speaking "the language of the age" are, for Qaradawi, remains at best uncertain (cf. Zaman 2005, 96–102). But even if some of it is only rhetoric, the fact that this rhetoric takes the form of a highly visible recognition of the need for change in

the styles and substance of religious education and that it comes from one of the most prominent scholars of contemporary Islam is surely not without importance. The change in question is the more significant for being visualized not only against the backdrop of a millennium-old tradition of learning but also with implicit reference to *new* institutions of higher Islamic education.

There is much that Qaradawi shares with ʻAli Khamene'i in his vision of Islamic higher learning. To say this is not, of course, to minimize the major doctrinal differences that divide the Shiʻa and the Sunnis, or the very considerable ill-will between the Salafis and the Shiʻa. Many Sunnis see the Shiʻa as coming perilously close to investing their imams with attributes that belong only to God and the Prophet and sometimes to God alone. The Shiʻa, for their part, view most of the Prophet's companions and other early Muslims—regarded by Sunnis, and not just the Salafis, as paragons of virtue and right guidance—as complicit in violating the divinely mandated plans for succession to the Prophet, hence as little better than hypocrites and even apostates. There are, of course, other differences too. The Shiʻi institution of khums has no parallel among the Sunnis. Nor do the Shiʻi structures of authority, or the doctrine of the wilayat al-faqih which builds on them. In view of such differences of overall context, the similarities between Khamene'i and Qaradawi and, more generally, between a view such as Khamene'i's and the vision underlying the Islamic universities of Saudi Arabia, become the more striking. Three of these similarities are worth noting here.

First, both Qaradawi and the Islamic universities, on the one hand, and Shiʻi ʻulama like Khamene'i, on the other, are deeply interested in religious education and its institutions as instruments of proselytism. This proselytizing zeal became a vehicle of the competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia for influence in the greater Muslim world during the last quarter of the twentieth century (cf. Kepel 2002), but this rivalry should not obscure the shared vision that underlies it. At least part of the emphasis on acquainting the ʻulama with contemporary intellectual trends, of learning foreign languages and speaking "the language of the age," is itself informed by the need to more effectively guide others to particular understandings of Islam. There is much that Qaradawi and Khamene'i have in common in this regard.

Second, in both visions, religious education is backed by, and deeply intertwined with, political power. In this respect, the position of the hawza in contemporary Iran is very different, of course, from the prerevolution period. It is also very different from contemporary Iraq: the hawza of Najaf, and its most visible contemporary figure, ʻAli al-Sistani, have exercised great political influence on the shape of politics in Iraq since the fall

of Saddam Hussein in 2003, but typically *without* aspirations to any direct or formal involvement in the political process. In Saudi Arabia, however, as in contemporary Iran, the religious establishment is patronized by, and is closely allied with, the state. The Shaykh al-Azhar, too, enjoys considerable influence in Egypt, of course (Zeghal, this volume); and, unlike, say, Pakistan, the relations between the institutions of Islamic education and the state are anything but adversarial in Indonesia (see Azra, Afrianty, Hefner, this volume). But in neither Indonesia nor Egypt have the leading scholars enjoyed the sort of authority that 'ulama like Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz Bin Baz (d. 1999) have in Saudi Arabia. For his part, Qaradawi's authority derives not from the backing of a state but from a complex combination of his scholarly credentials, the content and style of his discourses, and a sophisticated employment of information technologies in reaching large, transnational audiences. But even he would have been notably less successful in his endeavors without close ties with the ruling family of his adopted home, Qatar. And, in describing the successes of his institute of secondary religious education in Qatar, he makes it a point to note that a number of its graduates went on to become government ministers and ambassadors (al-Qaradawi 2002–04, 2:370–1), thereby underlining his view of what a successful religious education ought, inter alia, to accomplish.

Third, and finally, Qaradawi and Khamene'i speak in remarkably similar ways of the need for change in the texts used in madrasas, and both equally illustrate the shift from the authority of the texts in question to new ways of approaching their content. In this respect, there is a much wider gulf between 'ulama like Qaradawi and the Deobandis of Pakistan than there is between he and Khamene'i.

The similarities between Khamene'i and Qaradawi end, however, when it comes to the crucial question of who is to be counted among the 'ulama (on this question, cf. Berkey, this volume). For Khamene'i, as we have observed, the hawza alone is the site of serious scholarship in Islam: one cannot be a religious scholar outside the hawza anymore than one can be a physician without going to medical school. Part of Qaradawi's broad appeal rests precisely on his effort to mediate between the 'ulama, on the one hand, and the Islamists and other new religious intellectuals, on the other, arguing that the 'ulama ought to adapt themselves to changing times as the condition for a continuing role in guiding others. The 'ulama, however, comprise more than the graduates of madrasas or those, like himself, educated in the religious faculties of the Azhar. Qaradawi defines the 'ulama as "graduates of shari'a faculties and departments of Islamic studies, as well as everyone who has a [serious] interest in the shari'a sciences and Islamic culture and is active and productive as a scholar" (al-Qaradawi 2004, 2:991). If anyone had doubts about whether gradu-

ates of the Islamic universities, or other Islamist intellectuals, ought to be counted among the ʻulama, this statement is meant to put them to rest. The statement itself is part of Qaradawi's inaugural address on the occasion, in 2004, of the establishment of the International Alliance of the ʻUlama. The Alliance seeks to coordinate the activities of the ʻulama in various predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim societies, to provide them with an international forum and, thereby, to consolidate their influence and enhance their visibility. But, as his definition makes clear, it is not just the "traditional" ʻulama that it seeks to bring together.

The changes institutions of Islamic learning have undergone in the modern world mean that, to the extent that religious intellectuals might wish to be seen as "ʻulama" at all, it is very different sorts of scholars who might be seen as such. Graduates of madrasas in India and Pakistan; of the pesantrens and the madrasas, but also those of the State Institutes for Islamic Studies in Indonesia; of the madrasas of Mali, which have more in common with their namesake in Indonesia than they do with those of India and Pakistan; of the Islamic universities of, inter alia, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Pakistan; and of faculties of shariʻa and theology in many other countries—all might have potentially plausible claims to be counted among the ʻulama, not to mention those who have never attended any such institution. Given the informality characteristic of the transmission of learning in medieval Islam (see Berkey, this volume), the scholars of different times and places, but also within the same society, would have sometimes differed significantly in their intellectual formation. But modern educational reforms have institutionalized the differences at the same time that a globalized world creates unprecedented opportunities for those embodying these differences to come into contact with one another as well as with products of other systems of education. These are new opportunities, and imperatives, to decide what the ʻulama do or don't like about their peers, to decide, indeed, who ought to be *considered* as their peers. Precisely at a time when, with their multifaceted activities and their influential discourses, the ʻulama have acquired a new prominence in many societies (cf. Zeghal 1996; Zeghal, this volume; Zaman 2002) and forged new ties with other religious activists and intellectuals, the varied systems of education of which they are the products also make for a new incommensurability amongst them. It may well be that Qaradawi's International Alliance is an effort not merely to provide a global forum to the ʻulama or to extend their ranks, but also to redress perceived impediments to their mutual recognition and intelligibility. Yet even as it fosters a certain incommensurability, the very diversity in systems of religious education provides new approaches and new models for the ʻulama and their interlocutors to consider, debate, emulate, or adapt themselves to. And to observers of contemporary Islam, this diverse array offers rich illustra-

tions of how the scholarly tradition has come to be conceptualized, how religious authority is articulated, and how Islam and its institutions of learning are viewed in particular contexts today.

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Notes

1. All references here are to the English translation (Motahhari 2001).

2. The formulation "new religious intellectuals" (cf. Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996, 43–4, 77) refers to those contributing to debates on all matters Islamic in the contemporary Muslim public sphere, but without a formal religious education of the sort acquired in madrasas and comparable institutions.

3. I draw here on two of his speeches, the first delivered in Qum in December 1995 and the second in Tehran in September 1999 on the occasion of the commencement of the hawza's academic year. Both are reproduced in Arabic translation in *al-Hawza al-'ilmiyya* 2002, 141–85.

4. Two major Islamic universities have also been established with Saudi financial support in Islamabad, Pakistan (1980), and in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1983). On these universities, not discussed in this epilogue, cf. Nasr 2001, 124–6, 142; Kepel 2002, 93, 99.

5. A notable exception is the ten-volume commentary by an influential Saudi scholar Muhammad ibn Salih al-'Uthaymin (d. 2000) on a medieval work of Hanbali law (al-'Uthaymin 1994–2005). Al-'Uthaymin was a member of Saudi Arabia's Board of Senior 'Ulama and was associated with a regional branch of the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud University. On his life and career, see al-Husayn 2002.

6. For instance, at least three Ph.D. dissertations at the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud University took the form of editing portions of the *Sunan* of al-Nasa'i (d. 915), one of the six canonical collections of hadith among the Sunnis. See 'Atiyya, Hafani, and Yusuf 1995, 1:307. Editorial work on portions of al-Bayhaqi's (d. 1066) *Ma'rifa wa'l-sunan wa'l-athar* produced nine Ph.D. dissertations at the Umm al-Qura Islamic University in Mecca and two at al-Azhar in Cairo: see Yusuf 2003, 2:919–21.

7. Examples include: "A collection and study of hadith-reports concerning the virtues of Medina" ('Atiyya, Hafani, and Yusuf 1995, 1:492); "The legal understanding of hadith in the fourth century [of the Islamic calendar]" (Yusuf 2003, 2:626); "The administration of justice in the Qur'an and the Sunna" (Yusuf 2003, 2:627); "Hadith-reports relating to 'fixed' and 'discretionary' punishments and the law of retaliation" (Yusuf 2003, 2:674); "Hadith-reports relating to political

governance" (Yusuf 2003, 2:798), and the like. It should be noted that the sorts of topics mentioned in this and the previous note are not peculiar to the Islamic universities of Saudi Arabia. Theses and dissertations on similar topics are also produced at the religious faculties of the Azhar in Egypt and at faculties of theology in other countries. For examples from the Azhar, cf. Yusuf 2003, 1:45; 2:711, 721, 725, 733, 920, and 921.

Index

'Abbas Mirza, 48
'Abd al-Haqq, 65–66
'Abd al-Rahman, 'Umar, 121
'Abduh, Muhammad, 114–15
Abdülhamid II, Sultan, 14
Abu Hanifa, 258
Abu Zayd, Nasr Hamid, 113
Academy of Applied Sciences, 16
Academy of Islamic Research, 125
Aceh province (Indonesia), 179
adab, 30
Adabiyah School, 183
Ada Pemurtadan di IAIN, 191
Afghanistan, 32, 49, 61, 71, 73
Agai, Bekim, 15, 25–26
"Agreement of the Three Ministers," 186
Ahl-i Hadith, 62, 94–95
Ahmad, Abdullah, 183
Ahmad, Khurshid, 235
Ahmad, Mirza Ghulam, 71
Ahmadis (Qadiani), 71–74, 76, 94, 232
Ahsan, Manazir, 235–36
Al al-Shaykh, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, 261
Alam, Arshad, 100
Alam, Muzaffar, 100
Alevis, 25, 156–57
Alexandria (Egypt), 115
Ali, Dr. Mukti, 186, 189
'Ali, Muhammad, 16
Aligarh University, 95
alternative religious education, in Turkey, 157–67
Amiriya Muslim School, 96
Anderson, Benedict, 224
Anglo-Muhammadan law, 51–52
Anglo-Oriental Muslim Higher Secondary School, 96
Ankara (Turkey), 155–56
Ansari, 95
Anwarul 'Ulum Women's Arabic College, 98
'aql, 137
'Aqida Tahawiyya, 232
Arab Gulf states, and funding for al-Azhar, 121
Arabic language, 140–41, 203, 205, 210, 212–13
Arabization, of madrasa curriculum, 144
Arjomand, Said Amir, 6–7
Asad, Talal, 10–11
Asia Foundation, 189
assassinations, 73
Association for the Defense of the Finality of Prophethood, 72
Association of Muslim Schools (AMS), 232–33, 238
Asy'ari, Kyai Hasyim, 185
Atatürk (Mustafa Kemal), 15, 25, 150
attrition, 136–38
authority, political, of 'ulama, 249
authority, religious: fragmentation of, 145; of preeminent jurist (wilayat al-faqih), 247–49, 262; and transnational issues, 122–28. *See also* 'ulama
Aydin, Mehmet, 171n3
Azad, Maulana Abu'l Kalam, 92
Azhar, Mas'ud, 74
al-Azhar university (Egypt), 23–24, 32, 40, 107–28, 259–62; expansion of, 120–22; and postcolonial state, 117–20; and transnational debates, 122–28. *See also* Shaykh al-Azhar (Grand Imam)
Azharite institutes, 110, 112, 118–19. *See also* al-Azhar university (Egypt)
Azharites, 110–11, 115, 184, 190, 233, 259–60. *See also* al-Azhar university (Egypt)

Ba'asyir, Abu Bakar, 172, 192
Badawi, Dr. Zaki, 233–34
Bali (Indonesia), 172, 179
Bamako (Mali), 199, 213–14
Bangladesh, 227
al-Banna, Hasan, 112
Banten province (Indonesia), 179
Banuri, Muhammad Yusuf, 71–73, 75, 81
Barelawis (Ahl-i Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at), 62, 75, 94–95, 102
basic education, 131, 177–78, 203–7. *See also* literacy

Batusangkar (Indonesia), 183
al-Bayhaqi, 267n6
Begawala Madrasa, 97
Bell, David, 232
Berkey, Jonathan, 10–11, 21–22, 198n7
Bhutto, Zulfiqar ‘Ali, 70
Bihari, Muhibb Allah, 66
Bijnor (Uttar Pradesh), 97
Bin Baz, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, 261, 263
Birkbeck College, University of London, 234
Birmingham (England), 227
books, shortage of, 137
Borujerdi, Ayat Allah Husayn, 245–46
Boston University, Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs (CURA), 2
Bradford (England), 227
Brenner, Louis, 27, 33, 176, 238
Britain, 27–28, 224–39
al-Bukhari, 67
Bulliet, Richard W., 10
Bury (England), 237

Cairo (Egypt), 11, 45, 183
Cairo University, 112–13
canon, written, 10, 63–64, 140, 250–51, 263
cemaats, 157, 161–63, 167
Central Institute of Islamic Research, 72
Central Java province (Indonesia), 179, 193
Chamberlain, Michael, 10, 21, 47
Chirac, President Jacques, 126
citizenship, 123–28, 232–33
civic education, 189, 232–33
colonialism, 17–21. *See also* France
commentary, in madrasa curriculum, 64–66
compulsory education, 187
consensus, role of, 47, 51
conservationalism, 4, 45–48, 246–47. *See also* tradition
cost, of madrasa education, 138. *See also* funding
Crecelius, Daniel, 116
Cromer, Evelyn Baring, Earl of, 51
curriculum: of al-Azhar, 114; of IAIN, 189; of madrasa, 63–66, 77–79, 96–100, 135, 186, 200–202, 214, 256; of pesantren, 175–76. *See also* texts

Dachlan, Kyai Hajji Ahmad, 184
dakwah, women and, 181
Dar al-Hadith al-Hasaniyya, 144
Dar al-‘Ulum, 65, 75, 79–81, 88, 101, 112–13, 115, 228–30, 237–39
Dar al-‘Ulum Haqqaniyya, 73
dars al-kharij, 242
Darul Huda Islamic Academy, 98
Daudi Bohra, 94
dayah, 174
degrees: granted by higher education institutions, 234–35; granted by madrasas, 9, 43, 79–81, 186, 244; India, 97–98. *See also* Islamic universities; universities
Delanoue, Gilbert, 115
Delhi (India), 97
Demirel, Süleyman, 162
Deobandi madrasas, 19–20, 31, 49–50, 56, 61–86, 94, 100, 228, 237–38, 243, 256. *See also* Dar al-‘Ulum
Deobandis, 62–63, 95, 102
dershane, 157, 159
Dewey, John, 41
Dhofier, Zamakhsari, 185
din and dunya, 119–20
Diniyah School, 183
discipline, in madrasa learning, 137
discrimination, against Indian Muslims, 89–90
Dutch schools, 183

East Java province (Indonesia), 179, 184–85, 191
école franco-arabe, 213–14
education, “mixed,” 82
educational dualism, 182–83, 186, 191
educational system: Indonesia, 172–74, 181, 191–94; Mali, 214–15; Turkey, 154–57
education reform, 13–17, 53–54; al-Azhar and, 117–20; India, 94–95; Indonesia, 176–77, 182–87; Iran and Iraq, 242–52; Mali, 203–17; Morocco, 132–34, 140, 142–43; Pakistan, 77–81
Education Regulation of 1869 (Ottoman Empire), 14
Egypt, 8, 12, 16–17, 23–24, 56, 107–28, 226, 263; law of al-Azhar (1961), 117–20. *See also* al-Azhar university (Egypt)
Eickelman, Dale, 9, 17–18, 24–25, 33, 51
elite, military, as patrons of madrasas, 44–45

elite youth: and colonial schools, 208; and Gülen schools, 160; and madrasa education, 133–34; and mosque-universities, 140
employment, and madrasa education, 208–9, 212, 217
English language, 158, 161
enrollment trends, in Indonesia, 177–82
epistemologies, Muslim, 218–22. *See also* knowledge, religious
esotericism, 218–20
European Council of Fatwa and Research (ECFR), 124, 126–28
European Institute of Human Sciences, 241n2
exceptionalism, 33–34
experimentation, in madrasa curriculum, 66–70
explanation, in madrasa learning, 137–38
extremism, 54–55, 61–62, 89, 172–73

Fadl Allah, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn, 244
faith schools, 28, 228–33, 239
falsafa, 30. *See also* philosophy, study of
family, Islamic, and education choices, 31, 110–12, 179, 181–82, 186, 192, 199, 210–12, 238. *See also* elite youth
al-Fassi, Allal, 142
fatwas: al-Azhar, 118, 122–28; Deobandi, 101; Jamia Nizamia, 101–2
Faysal Award, 254
al-Fath journal, 116
feasts, for madrasa students, 133
Fez (Morocco), 131–32, 139, 141
fiqh, 5, 10, 42, 131, 136–39, 250
foreign languages, 252
foreign students, 93, 253, 257
Fortna, Benjamin C., 14–15, 34, 81
fragmentation of authority, 145
France: as colonial power, 133–34, 141–42, 200–201, 208–9, 212–13, 217; headscarf controversy, 122–28
Free Officers, 117–20
French Council of Islam (CFCM), 123
French language, 201, 205, 209, 212–13
French schools, 208–11
functionalization, 8, 231
funding, 7–8, 207; for al-Azhar, 121; for Islamia Schools, 230; for Shi'i 'ulama, 243
Furnivall, J. S., 3

Gad al-Haqq, Shaykh, 122
Gandhi, Mohandas, 91
Geertz, Clifford, 49, 136
gender issues, 23, 27, 98–99, 101, 137, 144, 154, 163, 180–81, 198n8, 237
Gérard, Etienne, 208–209
Germany, 154, 161
good works, 167
government employment, 208–209, 217
government schools, 141
grades and grading, 177, 204
guidance, moral/spiritual, 100–102
Gujarat state (India), 89
Gülen, Fethullah, 25–26, 149, 155, 157–68
Gülen movement, 25–26, 149, 153, 157–67
Gulf War of 1991, 244
Gulistan School, 96
Gum'a, Ali, 125

hadith, 63–67
hafiz, 138
hajj, 151
al-Hakim, Muhsin, 244
halqa (plural halaq), 6, 28
Hanafi school, 62–63, 156, 254, 260
Hanbali school, 48, 254, 258
Haqqani, Mukhtar Allah, 80
Haqqaniyya, 54
Hasan, Mahmud, 68
Hasan, Mufti Wali, 73
Hasan II, Sultan, 142–43, 145
Hasbullah, Kyai, 185
Hassan, Hamdi, 125–26
Hasyim, Wahid, 185
Hatta, Mohammad, 188
hawza, 242–52, 262–63
headscarf controversy, 122–28
healing practices, Muslim, 219–20
Hefner, Robert W., 20, 27
hidden imam, 248
hierarchy: in Indonesian educational system, 181–82; in Islamic education, 46, 230; of religious knowledge, 218–19
higher education, Islamic, 188–91, 228–29, 233, 235–37. *See also* Islamic universities
hijab, 122–28
al-Hilali, Taqi al-Din, 94
Hindu nationalism, 70, 88–89
Hindu nationalist party (BJP), 89

hizmet, 166–67
Hodgson, Marshall, 10, 29, 134
holy men, 102
houses of learning, 28
houses of light, 159
Husayn, Taha, 113, 118–19, 132
Hyderabad (India), 101

Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhab, Muhammad, 252, 254
Ibn Arabi, 218
Ibn Hanbal, 258
Ibn Khaldun, 30, 134, 218
Ibn Taymiyya, 48, 50
identity politics, 224
ijaza, 9, 43
ijtihad, 67, 132, 166, 236, 258–59
ʻilm, 4, 45, 47
Imam-Hatip schools, 154–55
Imam Muhammad ibn Saʻud Islamic University, 253
India, 18–20, 23, 31, 87–104, 227; Ministry of Human Resource Development, 96; Muslim population, 62, 70, 87–90. *See also* Deobandi madrasas
Indian Army, 89
Indian Mutiny of 1857, 256
indigenous languages, 205, 213
Indonesia, 1–2, 20–21, 26–27, 172–94, 263; educational system, 172–74, 181, 191–94; Law on Education (1950), 186; Law on Education (UUSPN, 1989), 176–77, 187; Ministry of Education and Culture, 185; Ministry of National Education (MONE), 177, 187; Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), 176, 179, 187, 189; National Law on Education (2004), 187; Regulation on National Curricula (1994), 187
Indramayu (Indonesia), 197n3
informal learning, 42–44, 112, 115, 139, 178, 225, 229, 243, 264
innovation, hostility to, 47–48. *See also* experimentation, in madrasa curriculum
interfaith programs, 233
International Alliance of the ʻUlama, 264
international education, 159–62
International Institute of Educational Planning, 146
Internet, 127, 144–45
"Interview with a Muslim Jinn," 145
Iqbal, Muhammad, 75
Iran, 15–16, 31, 48, 227, 242, 262
Iranian Revolution, 71, 247
Iraq, 45, 226, 242
Iraq war, 128
islah, 118–19
Islam: in Britain, 226–28; "coerced," 123–28; "national understanding" of, 153; nonstandard traditions, 11–12; preserving, 163–65; public, 109; recentering, 9–13; "republican," 152; "village," 227. *See also* Islamic education; Islamic universities; knowledge, religious; madrasas; Muslim population; ʻulama; *names of institutions and scholars*
Islamabad (Pakistan), 267n4
Islamia Schools, 230–33
Islamic College, 241n2
Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), 173
Islamic education: conservatism, 45–47; Gülen model, 162–67; history, 3–4; hybrid models, 229, 235–37, 239; informal, 42–44, 112, 115, 139, 178, 225, 229, 243, 264; internal dynamics, 33; modernization, 13–17, 21, 113–17; and Muslim identity, 91–93; plurality, 2; purpose, 35; rationalization, 212–15; reform, 13–17, 40–42, 53–54, 77–81, 117–20, 132–34, 140, 142–43, 176–77, 182–87, 203–17, 242–52. *See also* hawza; higher education, Islamic; Islamic universities; madrasas; médersas; pesantrens; *names of countries; names of institutions*
Islamic Foundation, 235
Islamic Institutes, 156
Islamic law, 21–22, 51–53, 135, 246
Islamic Middle Period, 5–7, 9–10, 42–44
Islamic renewal, 30–32
Islamic schools, 96, 177, 182, 192
"Islamic socialism," 120
Islamic studies, 28, 80, 113, 143–44, 233–35, 239
Islamic universities, 8–9, 23–24, 27, 120, 188–92, 242, 249, 252–65, 267n4. *See also* al-Azhar university (Egypt)
Islamic University of Medina, 253–57, 261
Islamism, 40, 51–53
Islamist intellectuals, 57–58, 107, 114, 263
Islamist paramilitaries, 173
Islamization, 31; and Islamia Schools, 231; in West Africa, 200–201
Isma'ili, 94

Istanbul (Turkey), 155
Ithna Ashari, 94

Jabali, Fuad, 191
Jaipur (India), 100
Jakarta (Indonesia), 173, 183, 188
Jama'at-i Islam, 235
Jamhari, 191
Jamia Arabia Shamsul Uloom, 88
Jamia Hamidia Rizvia, 95
Jamia Islamia, 95
Jamia Millia, 97
Jamia Nizamia, 101
Jamia Rahmania, 95
Jamia Salafia, 95
Jami'at al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya, 71–76
Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-i Hind, 91–92, 103–4
Java (Indonesia), 31, 174–76, 179, 184–85, 191
Jawi, 26
Jaysh-i Muhammad, 74
Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), 172
Jenne (Mali), 200
jihad, use of term, 54. *See also* extremism
Jinnah, Muhammad Ali, 91
Jiwan, Mulla, 65
Jombang (Indonesia), 185

kalam, 5
Karachi, Pakistan, 85n1
Kashmiri, Answarshah, 67–68, 72, 75–76, 258
Kashmir (India), 74
kaum muda, 21
kaum tua, 21
Kayranawi, Rahmat Allah, 256
kemajuan, 184
Kerala state (India), 98, 104
Khalwatiyya brotherhood, 116
Khamene'i, 'Ali, 243, 249–52, 262–64
Khan, Gen. Muhammad Ayub, 70
Khan, Sayyid Ahmad, 19, 95
Khan, Wahid al-din, 69–70
khanqah, 43
al-Khatib, Shaykh Muhibb al-Din, 115–16
Khidr, Shaykh Darwish, 115
Khomeini, Ayatollah, 246–48
khums, 262
Khurasan, 5, 43
knowledge, religious, 4–9, 45, 218–22, 248; transmission of, 42–44, 108–9, 112–13, 134–36
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), 267n4
Kulliyat al-Fiqh, 244
Kumar, Nita, 96–97
kuttabs, 5, 110, 112, 118, 131
kyai, 174

laicism, Turkish, 149–68
Lamongan (Indonesia), 172
laskar, 173
Laskar Jihad, 173
Lebanon, 226
Leicester (England), 227
lesson circles, 139
Levtzion, Nehemiah, 21
Libya, 233
literacy, 32, 99, 136–38, 143, 221
literary traditions, 29–30
London, 226–27
Loughborough University, 235
Ludhianawi, Muhammad Yusuf, 72–74
Luton (England), 227
Lyautey, Marshal Hubert, 133

Madani, Maulana Husain Ahmad, 102
madhhabs, 232
Madjid, Nurcholish, 22
madrasa, use of term, 5, 27, 40, 93, 98, 131, 176, 199
Madrasa Aliyah (MA), 177, 190
madrasa board (Delhi), 97
Madrasa Ibtida'iyah (MI), 177
Madrasa Jami'atul Hidaya, 100
madrasa learning, 61, 63–66, 136–39, 220–22, 242–43. *See also* curriculum; experimentation; pedagogy; tradition
madrasa movement, opposition to, 212–13
madrasa network, 201–203
madrasas: associated with extremism, 54–55, 61–62, 89, 172–73; development of, 5–7, 9–10, 42–45; numbers of, 85–86n1, 143, 173; and Qur'anic schools, 203–207; registration, 79; as sites of spiritual guidance, 100–102. *See also* Dar al-'Ulum; *names of countries; names of institutions*
Madrasat al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya, 244–45, 251
Madrasa Tsanawiyah (MTS), 177
Ma'had al-Zaytun, 197n3
Majallat al-Azhar journal, 116, 120
majlis schools, 203–204
Makhluf, Muhammad Hasanayn, 116

Maksum, Kyai Ali, 185
Malaysia, 234
Mali, 27, 31, 199–222; educational system, 214–15; Ministry of Education, 214; Muslim population, 217
Malik ibn Anas, 258
Mallat, Chibli, 245
Maluku province (Indonesia), 173
Mamluks, 44
Mandaville, Peter, 27–28
Mansur, Ahmad Subhi, 121
"manuals of correct practice," 246
ma'rifa, 135–36
al-Marghinani, 63–64
Markfield Institute of Higher Education, 235–37
Marrakesh (Morocco), 131, 139, 141
Marxism, 245
Marzuq, Abessabur, 125
mass education, 32–33, 143–46
Mawdudi, Sayyid Abu'l-A'la, 235, 254–56
Mawlay Hasan I, Sultan, 132–33
McGill University, 189
Mecca, 256
médersas, 199–200
media networks, 127, 160, 216
medreses, 150–51, 158
memorization, 46, 132, 134–39, 141
Messick, Brinkley, 22, 50–51
Metcalf, Barbara, 18–20, 23, 70, 226, 238
middle class: Indonesia, 174, 182, 193; Turkey, 160–61
Middle East, study in, 190, 197n4
"middle way," 109
migration, 226–27
military, Turkish, 152–53
minority rights, in India, 90
missionary activity, in Turkey, 171n3
missionary schools, 52, 165, 202, 213
modernism, in Indian madrasas, 95
modernization, in Turkish republic, 150–52
modernization, of Islamic education, 13–17, 21, 113–17
modernization theory, 114
Morocco, 17–18, 24–25, 31, 131–46
mosques, as centers of education, 42
mosque-universities, 131, 139–41
Motahhari, Murtaza, 34, 245–47, 258
msids, 131
Muhammad, 'Umar Shaykh, 74
Muhammadiyah, 26, 177, 184, 193
Mukhtar, Habib Allah, 73
al-Mukmin, 192
al-Munir journal, 183
Muntada al-Nashr, 243–44
muqaddamat, 242
Musharraf, Gen. Pervez, 61, 70, 79
Muslim, definition of, 71, 73–74, 76
Muslim Brotherhood, 114, 120, 125
Muslim chaplaincy program, 236–37
Muslim College, 233–35
Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), 227, 230
Muslim identity, in India, 87–90
Muslim population: Britain, 226; India, 62, 70, 87–93; Mali, 217; Pakistan, 62
al-Muzaffar, Muhammad Rida, 243

Nadwat al-'Ulama, 93–94
Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), 26, 185, 193
nahw, 5
Najaf (Iraq), 243, 251, 262–63
al-Nasa'i, 267n6
Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 117–20
National Islamic Universities, 175
nationalism: Hindu, 70, 88–89; Indian, 91; Turkish, 165–66
nationalization, of al-Azhar, 24, 32
nation-building, Indonesian Muslims and, 187, 193–94
"new religious intellectuals," 248, 263, 267n2
New York Times Magazine, 1, 54
Ngruki (Indonesia), 172
nizam, 132
Nizam al-din, Mulla, 66
Nizam al-Mulk, 6, 8, 43
North, Douglas, 108
North Maluku province (Indonesia), 173
North-West Frontier Province, 73
numeracy, 99, 221
Nurcu movement, 25, 157–58
Nursi, Said, 25, 157, 163

objectification, 51–52
Oldham (England), 227
Open University, 234
Orientalism, 46
orthodoxy, 11
Ottoman Empire, 13–15, 41–42, 48, 52, 66, 81–82, 150
Özal, Turgut, 162
Özdalga, Elisabeth, 171n7

Padang (Indonesia), 183
Padang Panjang (Indonesia), 183
Pakistan, 1, 22–23, 32–33, 42, 49, 52–54, 57, 61–62, 77–81, 85n1, 227, 251; Deobandis in, 70–77; Muslim population, 62
Pakistan Integrated Household Surveys, 86n1
pamphlets, circulation of, 145
Papua province (Indonesia), 179
Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS), 234
Partition, 88, 91–92
patrons, for rural madrasas, 142–43
Pearl, Daniel, 74
pedagogy, of madrasa learning: explanation, 137–38; memorization, 46, 132, 134–39, 141; Qur'anic schools, 204–5; recitation, 137–38; understanding, 134–39, 141–42
Pesantren Krapyak, 185
pesantrens, 172–94, 197n2
Pesantren Tambak Beras, 185
Pew Charitable Trusts, 2
Pew Global Attitudes surveys, 25, 146
philosophy, study of, 244–46
philosophy departments, 143–44
pilgrimage, 6, 175
pluralism, 2, 33
political power, and Islamic education, 262–63
polyvocality, 47, 49–50
pondok, 174
popular customs, 115; Deobandis and, 49–50
populism, of Shi'i 'ulama, 246–49, 252
Portsmouth University, 235
postgraduate education, 187
print culture, 50–51, 132
professionalization, of teaching, 205–206
proselytism, 251–52, 262
"proto-Pakistanis," 88
punishment, in madrasas, 137
Punjab province (Pakistan), 85n1

Qadiriyya Sufi order, 216, 219
Qadiyani, 232
al-Qaradawi, Shaykh Yusuf, 126–28, 241n2, 259–64
Qarawiyin, 131–34, 139, 142–44; student population, 136, 141
Qatar, 259, 261, 263
qira'a, 5
Qudrullah Gulzar-e-talim, 96
Qum, 267n3
Qur'anic courses, 155–56
Qur'anic schools, 200, 202–7, 213
Qutb, Sayyid, 112

Rabat (Morocco), 144
racism, 227
Rahman, Fazlur, 72
Rasul, Haji, 184
Rawls, John, 68
recitation, in madrasa learning, 137–38
registration of madrasas, 79
regulation of madrasas, 213–15
religious institution, defined, 108
religious instruction in schools, 156–57
Republican People's Party (Turkey), 152
residency, and citizenship, 123–28
Rida, Rashid, 116
rijal al-din, 119
Ringer, Monica M., 34
rulers, and 'ulama, 29
Rushdie, Salman, 227

Sadat, Anwar, 120–22
al-Sadr, Muhammad Baqir, 34, 244–46, 251
Salafis, 116, 119, 121, 210–11, 220, 231–32, 261–62
Saleh, Walid, 76
santri, 175
Sarkozy, Nicolas, 123
Saudi Arabia, 242, 252–65
Sawlat al-Nisa, 256
Sawlatiyya madrasa, 256–57
scholars, Western-educated, 189
school establishment, Gülen and, 160–61
schooling: impact of, 208–10; social demand for, 211–12
school inspection, 143
School of Oriental and African Studies, 233
Schools for Religious Teachers, 190
science and religion, Gülen and, 163–64
scripturalism, 49–50
secularism: India, 90; Mali, 213. *See also* Turkey
sekolah dasar, 178
sekolah Islam, 177, 182. *See also* Islamic schools
Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN), 198n9
Sekolah Tinggi Islam (STI), 188
Selly Oaks College, 233

Semarang (Indonesia), 183
semi-literati, 115
separationism, 29
Shafi‘, Mufti Muhammad, 65, 75
al-Shafi‘i, 258
Shah, Naser al-Din, 16
Shahin, ‘Abd al-Sabur, 113
Shamzai, Nizam al-din, 73–74, 80
“share of the imam,” 243
shari‘a, 34, 52, 76–77, 133. *See also* Islamic law
Shaykh al-Azhar (Grand Imam), 118, 122–28, 263
shaykhs: reformist, 6, 9, 111, 140; Sufi, 219–20
shaykh ummi, 11
Shi‘a, 62, 71–73, 242–52, 262
Shubban al-muslimin, 201
Siddiqui, Ataullah, 236–37
Sindhi, ‘Ubayd Allah, 22, 68–69, 77
Sindh province (Pakistan), 85n1
Sir Sayyad Public School, 96
al-Sistani, ‘Ali, 262–63
social exclusion, 227
social inequality, 210
social mobility, 111–12, 138, 209
social pluralism, 3–4, 224–39
social reality, 162–64, 166–67
Solo (Indonesia), 192
Soroush, ‘Abdolkarim, 248–49, 251
Soudan Français, 199. *See also* Mali
South Asia, 61–86. *See also* India; Indonesia; Pakistan
South Kalimantan province (Indonesia), 179, 191
special-program senior high madrasas, 186–87
Starrett, Gregory, 8, 12, 24, 51, 56, 231
state: and education reform, 55–56, 185–87, 212–15; and funding for madrasas, 7–8; interventionist, 4; and Islamic education, 13–17, 28–29; and ‘ulama, 116–17. *See also names of countries*
state, Islamic, 70–71, 74–81
state, secular, 90, 149–54
State Institutes for Islamic Studies (IAIN), 80, 175, 187–92, 197n5, 198n9
state schools, 200
student population, 136, 141, 144, 235. *See also* elite youth
Sudan, 146
Sufi orders, 216, 219
Sufis and Sufism, 43, 102, 116, 121
Suleiman the Magnificent, 14
Sumatra Thawalib, 183–84
summer camps, religious, 158–59
sunna, 48
Sunni Renaissance, 44–45
Sunnis, 62–63, 262
Supreme Court of Pakistan, Shari‘at Appellate Bench, 80–81
surau, 174, 183–84
Surau Jembatan Besi, 184
sutuh, 242
Syzynty journal, 159

Tabataba’i, ‘Allamah Muhammad Husayn, 245–46
tabligh, 251–52, 262
Tablighi Jama‘at, 93
tafsir, 5
tahdith, 118–19
al-Tahtawi, Rifa‘a, 115
tajdid, 166
Taliban, 1, 19, 32–33, 52, 62, 71, 73, 172
Tamim, Kyai, 185
Tanta (Egypt), 115
Tantawi, Shaykh, 122–28
taqlid, 48, 67
tasawwuf, 115. *See also* Sufis and Sufism
Taylor, Charles, 34
teacher, role of, 9, 160, 166, 168, 190–91, 221
teaching, professionalization of, 205–206
Tebuireng pesantren, 184–85
technology, modern, ‘ulama and, 57–58
Tehran (Iran), 267n3
Tehran University, 245
tekkes, closure of, 151
temsil, 160
texts, 10, 63–64, 140, 186, 205, 250–51, 263
textual community, 157
Thanawi, Ashraf ‘Ali, 64–65
theology faculties, 155–56
Tijaniyya Sufi order, 216, 219
Timbuktu, 200
TIS (Turkish-Islamic-Synthesis), 152–53, 156, 161–62
tomb complex, 6, 45, 102
tradition: and experimentation, 66–70; Gülen and, 163–65; in Islamic universities, 257–59; in madrasa curriculum,

63–66; madrasas and, 174–77; in ‘ulama culture, 75–77
transnational issues, al-Azhar and, 122–28
Turkey, 15, 25–26, 149–68; constitution of 1982, 153; Directorate of Religious Affairs, 150, 153–55, 168; educational system, 154–57; Law for the Unification of Education, 150–51; secularist laws, 151
Turkish-Islamic-Synthesis (TIS), 152–53, 156, 161–62
“Turks,” as nationality, 151
tutorial approach, 204, 206

‘ulama, 4, 29, 80; and Anglo-Muhammadan law, 52; authority of, 10–11, 34, 45, 53; Azharite, 113–22, 124–28; Deobandi, 66–70; and education reform, 132–34; inclusion among, 263–64; marginalization of, 107; and modern technology, 57–58; new, 221; as open elite, 46–47; Pakistani, 70–77; peripheral, 24, 109, 124–28; relations with state, 55–57, 116–17; Saudi, 258; Shi‘i, 243. *See also* kyai
Umm al-Qura University, Mecca, 253
understanding, in Islamic education, 134–39, 141–42
Union Culturelle Musulmane, 201
Union des Organisations Islamiques de France, 124
United States-Pakistan relations, 52
Universitas Islam Indonesia, 188
Universitas Islam Negeri, 189
Université Mohammed V, 142, 144
universities, 8–9, 79–81, 112, 139–40, 155–56, 197n5, 234–35. *See also* Islamic universities
University of Baghdad, 244
University of Isfahan, 248
University of Kufa, 244
Urdu language, 98–99
ustadz, 190
usul al-fiqh, 5
al-‘Uthaymin, Muhammad ibn Salih, 267n5
‘Uthmani, Muhammad Taqi, 65, 75, 79–81
‘Uthmani, Zafar Ahmad, 64–65
Uttar Pradesh state (India), 95–97, 99

Varanasi (Banaras) (Uttar Pradesh), 95–97
violence, anti-Muslim, 89
Voll, John O., 21
voluntary associations, 31, 193, 201, 215–17

Wahhabi Islam, 257–59
Wahhabis, 48, 121, 211–12, 253. *See also* Salafis
Wali Allah, Shah, 66, 68–69
waqf, 7
wasat, 109
Weiss, Bernard, 64
West, rise of, 28–29
West Bengal state (India), 97–98
Western education, 28–32. *See also* universities
Westernization, 150–52, 256
West Sumatra province (Indonesia), 183, 193
wilayat al-faqih, 247–49, 262
women: and Islamic education, 23, 27, 98–99, 101, 137, 144, 154, 180–81, 198n8; and Islamic preaching, 181; and Muslim chaplaincy, 237
Working Group on Madrasas and Muslim Education, 2
World Bank, 86n1
World Islamic Call Society, 233

Yassine, Nadia, 145
“yellow scriptures,” 175
Yemen, 226
Yilmaz, Ihsan, 166
Yogyakarta (Indonesia), 173, 184–85, 188
youth organizations, 201
Yunus, Mahmud, 183
al-Yunusi, Zainuddin Labai, 183
Yusufiya, 131, 133–34, 139; student population, 136, 141

zakat tax, 57
Zaman, Muhammad Qasim, 18–19, 22–23, 27, 34, 52, 238
al-Zawahiri, Ayman, 57
zawiyas, 139
al-Zaytun, Ma‘had, 197n3
Zeghal, Malika, 23–24, 53, 150
Zia al-Haqq, General Muhammad, 70, 78

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